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INDIAN WRITERS AT CHIDAMBARAM

PROCEEDINGS

of the

THIRD ALL-INDIA WRITERS' CONFERENCE

(ANNAMALAINAGAR, 1954)

INDIAN WRITERS AT CHIDAMBARAM

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Organized by
THE ALL-INDIA CENTRE OF THE P.E.N.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Third All-India Writers' Conference was held under the auspices of the P.E.N. All-India Centre in April 1954 at Annamalainagar. This is a report of the proceedings and the papers which were read at the Conference. Not all the papers could be included, however, because we did not receive some of them at all.

We regret that it was not possible to publish this report earlier, because the stenographers' reports of the proceedings were unfortunately not in good order.

We take this opportunity, therefore, of thanking specially Miss Hilla Vakeel for the hard work she had to put in while preparing the copy for the press as well as the staff of the P.E.N. All-India Centre for their co-operation.

Lastly we apologize for any errors that may have inadvertently crept into the printed report.

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THE THIRD ALL-INDIA WRITERS' CONFERENCE ANNAMALAINAGAR

16th, 17th and 18th April 1954

President : Dr. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

[The Third All-India Writers' Conference met in a special *pandal* erected within the precincts of the Annamalai University. Writers, poets and journalists from different parts of India, Pakistan and other countries attended it.

The proceedings began with an invocation by Shri N. S. Chidambareswara Deekshitar of Chidambaram. Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar welcomed the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Vice-President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the distinguished guests and the delegates to the Conference.—Ed.]

WELCOME ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

I count it a special privilege to accord to you my welcome on this occasion. My welcome is first due to you, Mr. Prime Minister, who, at great personal inconvenience, have come here to inaugurate this Conference. There is a peculiar appropriateness in your functioning in that capacity because you are not only a great statesman and orator but an illustrious writer. You have written history in the way in which it should be written. It was Emerson who said, "True history is biography." The history of India during the last few years has been the biography of Mahatma Gandhi and all other great disciples of his, including you, Mr. Prime Minister. And in

your history, in that discovery that you have made from your own point of view of India, and more even in your "Letters" to your daughter in which you have manifested qualities which do not always go hand in hand with serious history, you have made good your claim as one of the great writers of India. In that capacity, as well as in your capacity as the Head of the Government of India and in your capacity as a world statesman, I give you my welcome.

To you also, Dr. Radhakrishnan, a special welcome is due from us. You have, during the long course of successful educational development, development of yourself and development of a number of generations who have sat at your feet, made your reputation as a great *guru* and *kulapati*. You have also, by virtue of your philosophical works, made it possible for philosophy to become easy of comprehension. You have, in addition, carried your message far and wide from this country, and you have truly acted as an ambassador of reconciliation, of unity and of consolidation and co-ordination of national and international efforts. You have, in addition to your scholastic and your teaching capacity, lately assumed the role of a great statesman, and have in that capacity done much in the way of healing the differences between parts and parts of India and parts and parts of the world. You, I acclaim, as the President of the P.E.N. Conference, and I give you my welcome.

I am very glad that the Governor has been able to be present with us. He is a man of catholic and wide interests and his presence will be a source of encouragement and stimulus to the conference.

I welcome you all to Chidambaram, that seat and that scene of the great cosmic dance of Nataraja, who typified the triumph over evil by means of harmony and of the prevalence of the forces of good against the forces of evil. This is a place also of reconciliation. Side by side with this shrine of Nataraja is the shrine of Govindaraja, the great embodiment of the recumbent posture, contemplating the rise and evolution of the Universe. This has also been the place where the great Harijan saint, Nanda, conquered prejudice

by his meekness and suffering and was acclaimed by the Divine as one fit to become part of his substance.

This is also a place, Mr. Prime Minister and Dr. Radhakrishnan, of great literary memories. There was a time when Thillai, the *kovil*, the temple *par excellence*, as it is called in Tamil literature, was the scene of the literary labours, of the great outpourings and yearnings for the Divine, which characterized the great Tamil saints. This is a place where all the Tamil saints have stayed, sojourned and sung. This is also the place where, at a later period, the lost classics of Tamil were retrieved and republished for the delectation and the instruction of the world. Again, this was a place where the founders of the great Saiva Siddantha System opened their programme of the great unification of the South. Indeed, Chidambaram stands pre-eminently as a symbol of Tamil culture, a culture with an antiquity which does not yield to that of Sanskrit and which, in the matter of pure devotional outpouring, exuberance and ebullience of language, has hardly a parallel in the world's literature.

Now, in this or near this great shrine and temple, the embodiment of the culture of the Tamil country, there is also the embodiment of the triumphant architecture and the even more triumphant sculpture which faces the world in the image of Nataraja, as the type of repose in motion, of arrested equilibrium in the midst of such infinite movement. Not only does it stand as an embodiment of sculpture and architecture, but in the temple pillars which you will see, Mr. President, are set out all the 108 varieties of the classical dance of India which has now, after some years of neglect, indeed, opprobrium, come to its own. The Government of India is now doing its very best to encourage that classical music and that classical dance of which Chidambaram is an architect and a symbol.

Near this Chidambaram a far-sighted philanthropist initiated and originated the University which is supposed to play the host to the P.E.N. Conference. In this University we are endeavouring to combine multiform scientific training with the study of the Humanities. We have instituted quite recently

a school of architecture, painting and sculpture, realizing and feeling that in this part of the world, where that culture is an indigenous one, such a school would be of great value. Our Musical School, our Musical Department, is one that has gained a well-deserved all-India reputation. We are also attempting many new developments, some of which I shall place before you. In our Agricultural Department we are endeavouring to bridge the gulf which separates the university product from the peasant and the agriculturist. Our idea is that these students of agriculture should take part in the operations of agriculture, working side by side with the peasant, making experiments and enlisting the support of the latest scientific theories and practices for the purpose of instructing and being instructed. We are endeavouring in our Agricultural Department to make the students peasant-conscious and the peasants university-conscious. Also, we have been making some experiments in marine biology; in Porto Novo we run a school of marine biology and we hope to attain great results from it.

Now, Shri Krishnamachari, you are tomorrow morning visiting the lignite site not far from this place. We have the possibility of helping the Central Government in this matter. We have the possibility, in this University, of giving help and being helped. I trust that this missionary attitude of mine will not be misunderstood. This is not an interpolation asking for an immediate response from Shri T. T. Krishnamachari. Nor is it an attempt, taking advantage of the presence of the Prime Minister here, to force your hands. But I hope that you will think of the possibility of utilizing this University for the great work on hand. Some of us who had made experiments in irrigation and hydro-electric development many decades ago were foiled in our attempts or truncated in our attempts because of the lack of adequate fuel, for this is not a coal country. But, as you know, lignite is immature coal and, immature as it is, I am told that it will "suffice"—I am saying it within inverted commas—for two thousand years of normal consumption. Whatever that be, I trust that my prayers will not go unheeded.

We are also making a great experiment in this University,

an experiment encouraged and inaugurated by Dr. Radhakrishnan in that memorable University Commission Report of which he was the main progenitor. We have started as an optional course a general educational curriculum by means of which the student of Science will have some knowledge of the Humanities and the student of the Humanities some knowledge of Science. So, we propose to cure the possibility of lop-sided development, some of the deleterious consequences of which we see around us.

I am glad that the University, situate in this place, in the heart of the agricultural districts of the South, and standing so near a centre of culture like the one I tried to describe, is acting as a host to the P.E.N. Conference. This is the Third All-India Writers' Conference. It was a poet who said: "We are the music-makers, And we are the dreamers of dreams, . . . Yet we are the movers and shakers, Of the world for ever, it seems." The task of the man of literature, the task of the man of ideas, is something fundamentally and predominantly greater and mightier than the task of any statesman or politician. It is the ideas generated by great literary men that have irradiated the world and made it more agreeable and lovable as well as enabled us to get through travail and suffering and to look forward to the consolations that are not always accorded to us by our humdrum companions. There is a great deal to be done by Indian literary men. Some of the Indian languages have great ancient literatures, but all of them have seen a period of stagnation. It is the task of the writers of today and the writers of tomorrow not to think always of the past, not to write commentary upon commentary or concordance upon concordance, but to vivify India, to renovate and regenerate India, a process which can only be done by the novelist, the dramatist, the essayist and the poet and can be done by them better than by any other people that can be thought of in this connection.

In the hope that this Conference will lead to a renaissance and in the hope that in this country, on this site, such a renaissance may be inaugurated, I ask you, Mr. Prime Minister, to inaugurate this Conference.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS**PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**

I have come here for a bare day to attend this P.E.N. Conference and, in between, to take part in some other engagements. The Vice-President and I have travelled a long way to be present here for a day. Why have I come here? What drew me here? I have come here because I am greatly interested in the activities of the P.E.N. as representing an attempt to help, develop and harmonize the various literatures of India. Moreover I came here—I was made to come here, if I may say so—because your Conference was meeting at this particular place which is the seat of Tamil literature. Although unfortunately I am not acquainted with Tamil, and I fear it is rather late in the day for me to try to get much acquaintance with it, I wanted to pay my tribute to this great language of India, and to express my belief in its vital importance to India and to say how the whole of India, not only your part of the country, should be interested in knowing something about this language and its literature and in helping to develop it.

My predecessor, Dr. Ramaswami Aiyar, touched upon such a multitude of fascinating subjects in his brief speech that there is some danger of my being led away into those avenues of thought. But I want to restrain myself and speak more particularly about the P.E.N. and its activities and its objectives. The P.E.N. has honoured me by making me a Vice-President and just now you have heard Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar referring to me as a writer. I have been a writer rather incidentally and accidentally. I do not know if I shall have occasion to write much in future. But whether what I wrote was of value or not, I have no doubt that the writing of it was of tremendous value to me. In the other activities I have had to undertake and indulge in in subsequent years and today, the fact of my having written and all the processes that go with writing—as many of you know, writing is only the final culmination of various processes, mental and other—have been, I think, of inestimable value to me and have given me greater insight than perhaps the mere reading of books might

have done. Reading helps, of course, to appreciate the value of the language of a country and what is represented in writing by the writer, by the poet, by the artist and the like.

Now, we are busy building up this old country of ours, renovating and making it a new India. It is a tremendous task, a task in which every one of us, the millions who live in this country, can and should take part. There are so many aspects of this building up. Speaking from memory, I do not remember that the Five-Year Plan has at all discussed literature in India, or the writer, or the artist. Well, perhaps, we could hardly have expected the authors of the Plan to do so. But that does not mean that either they, the members of the Planning Commission, or others connected with them, ignore this aspect. Inevitably they had to lay stress on certain other activities of the Nation which they wished to encourage; activities which were basic and which enfolded other aspects. It is of no use talking about great literature to a starving person. We have to feed him before we talk to him about religion or morality or anything similar to it. The best morality is to feed him. A poor nation like ours, therefore, has to think in those terms first. But the fact remains that even though the Five-Year Plan did not mention this, it is essential that an organization like the P.E.N. should think of it. That is its especial function.

Recently, as you must know, at the instance of the Education Ministry of the Government of India, a Sahitya Akademi was started which, probably, in a sense covers the same field as the P.E.N. does. I hope there will be a large measure of co-operation between it and the P.E.N. There can, of course, be no conflict.

Now, about the Sahitya Akademi of India, what exactly does it mean? I do not know how to define it exactly. But it takes into its scope all the major languages of India and I hope even those languages that are not major but certainly the big languages. Language is an extraordinarily tricky thing over which people get frightfully excited and bring it unfortunately into the realm of politics to the detriment of both politics and the language. To some extent we cannot help this.

It is extraordinary how people get passionate over language. That shows how intimately they feel about questions relating to language, because language is a part of themselves.

Only about four or five days ago I had a letter from a person who was very well known 30 years ago or more in Irish revolutionary history. She is a lady and I might tell you she is leading a very retired life now. But evidently she is full of the fire that the Irish revolutionaries of those days possessed. She began the letter in Gaelic but, realizing, of course, that I could not possibly read Irish, she had again to write it in English, for which she apologized and said, "I have to write to you in the language of the enemy." This shows the passion behind it. Now all those old fights, struggles and conflicts are long over in Ireland as in India, and yet in this lady's mind the memory of those struggles is still there and in writing in English she had to think of it as the language of the enemy with whom she had been fighting 30 or 40 years ago. So, language plays a tremendous part in our lives.

We are passing through a period of transition in everything, even in regard to the question of language, the medium of instruction and all that. I do not wish to say much about these educational matters. Our problem is how not only to develop our languages but to bring them, in a sense, closer in spirit to one another. I do not mean that they should isolate themselves from the languages of the world. They should also have contacts with them, but essentially these languages—great languages of India—should come closer to one another. That does not mean, again, that they should leave their intrinsic nature and evolve themselves by some artificial in-between thinking; I do not believe in that. But I do think that the problem before us is to develop in India what might be called an Indian literature in the various languages.... If people know each other's languages, each other's thoughts, they will come nearer to each other. That, I think, is the main function of the Sahitya Akademi and that is also the function of the P.E.N. Of course, you have Tamil literature, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Urdu, Gujarati literatures and so on. I do not wish to interfere with their development. Neverthe-

less, I think we should try to develop certain common approaches like common knowledge of each other's literature and something which may be termed "Indian literature." How is this to be done? It cannot be done by some decree or by some resolution. It is a growth. Language itself is something which you may help in developing by your courses in schools and universities. But, nevertheless, it is much more like a tender plant which grows by itself, which cannot be pulled out if you want it to grow. You have to give it living substances. Similarly, language is essentially a living thing. We have to treat these languages of ours as vital, throbbing, living and growing things. We have to allow them to grow, give them the soil to grow, which means creating the opportunity and environment for the writer, the poet and the novelist to function.

I think that in any country, and more especially in a country like India, which today, in spite of its ancient roots, is trying to galvanize itself anew and put on, to some extent, a new garb, these aspects of literature and art are very essential. That is what I meant when I said to you that the little bit of writing I had indulged in, not very deliberately but almost by force of circumstance, helped me greatly to understand many things of which, perhaps, I might have missed the significance by confining my activities purely to the political sphere which absorbs so much of my time. All the Five-Year Plans and all the building that we attempt may have little significance if we miss the spirit behind all these things and it is for the writer, the poet and the artist, essentially, to provide that spirit.

I do not mean that every person who writes a book strengthens that spirit at all. Often he provides a headache to the person who tries to read his book. It is no good our imagining that we are producing classics in literature today, because, I think, we are not. We sometimes produce tolerably good books, tolerably good poems and all that. There is a tendency—I am not speaking, of course, about Tamil literature, because I do not know anything about it—in the North for very many second-rate people to imagine that they are

geniuses and that they are producing books of genius. We have, I regret to say, not developed real critical standards, which is bad. If any person ventures even mildly to criticize a book, it leads to almost a violent quarrel with the writer of the book, and all kinds of difficulties arise. So, most wise people refrain from criticizing lest they should get into difficulties. This is not good enough.

I attach the greatest importance to the development, not of the writing of the book—anybody can write a book—but to what lies behind the writing of the book, which, ultimately, is the emotion which produces the book (and not the hackneyed writing of the book), because it is the emotion that produces a fine picture or a fine poem and behind that emotion there is much else, too. If India is to be big and great, it must have that emotion, that spirit which moves, in addition to many other things. It is true, perhaps, that all the emotion in the world by itself is not enough. We have got to build bridges and factories and other things to provide employment, food, etc., for our country. We have to have both that practical side, which perhaps we tended to neglect in the past when other countries went ahead and which is very important, and the other side, which supplies that essential and vital thing which gives life to that practical side, you may call it what you like, spirit or emotion or anything else. We have to do all this in a spirit of synthesis in this vast land of ours. Otherwise, we do not profit by our tremendous inheritance. Each one of us is an inheritor of India, the whole of it, not only what it is today but the thousands of years that lie behind it. Its history, its culture, its traditions—good and bad—and all that we have inherited. Each one of us should be proud of this inheritance, we should try to live up to it and we should all try to build upon it. Therefore, if we live, speaking mentally, in a corner and ignore the rest, well, we are untrue not only to India and our own inheritance but to ourselves.

So, we have to take this wide view. I would say that we are the inheritors of not only what India has done in the last 5,000 or 10,000 years but, in a sense, what the whole world has done, because everybody in the world inherits all that has

gone before, and we should be broad-minded enough to make it our own, so far as we can profit by it.

For the moment, leaving out the whole world—although it is important—let us think of India and, more especially, the writers and others who think of this whole, wide canvas of India. While they may express themselves in the particular language they can write in, in the particular form that that language possesses, nevertheless, they must always keep this full picture of India in view. Now, it is in this matter that the P.E.N. Conference or the Sahitya Akademi can render tremendous service. Ultimately, of course, success depends not on conferences and academies but on the type of human material that India produces. You cannot produce a genius by decree. You can produce an environment which prevents the suppression of genius. That is what the Government or an organization can do—provide favourable environments. So, the problem of any government, in the ultimate analysis, is to provide an environment for every person in the country to develop, as far as he has the capacity to develop, in every way. We provide the environment; but ultimately whether the genius manifests or not is a matter of chance, inheritance, luck or whatever it may be. But looking at India, as she has been and is, we have not lacked great men in various fields of human activity. And I have little doubt that if we give this opportunity for growth to a much larger number of people than it has been possible in the past, tapping the enormous reservoir of India, I have no doubt that we shall succeed in finding many great men, whether in the field of literature or art or engineering or in any other service that the country might demand today.

We are, however, discussing literature and I want to stress the importance of developing this environment, which produces good literature, because I think that it is a powerful, sometimes direct and more often an indirect influence on the nation but nevertheless a powerful and enduring one. Those people, reformers you may call them, who go foremost directly preaching reforms sometimes do not succeed in the same measure as those who adopt an indirect approach. Even in

such a thing as warfare—I am leaving, for the moment, the hydrogen bomb out of consideration—a good general does not barge in, head foremost, but thinks of numerous indirect approaches to undermine or defeat the enemy. Probably, in human relations also, the wise man often adopts the indirect approach, not leaving out, of course, the direct approach. What I mean is that a direct approach which leads to direct conflict sometimes does not yield results so easily as an approach which avoids conflict. I do not mind conflict in the sense of a battle of ideas; that is essential. But I do mind some kinds of conflict that rouse passion on the other side; then we do not discuss anything; we only abuse each other as, indeed, is evident in the international political sphere to-day. There is very little that might be called reasonable argument about the various major problems. There is largely abuse. There are fixed ideas and fixed convictions and if any person does not agree with them, he may even be considered a scoundrel.

The other failing, if it is a failing, of the world today is that it begins to think more and more in terms of problems, world problems, being decided by sheer force and violence. It is very difficult for me to say that force or violence has not achieved something in the past. But I am quite certain in my mind that force and violence by themselves ultimately do not achieve much. Other factors come in: human beings come in, the masses and the individuals; and that is where the poet comes in, where the writer comes in, who, writing presumably in a quiet arena and not engaged in conflict with somebody else, can write objectively. He writes calmly and objectively, and makes other people think calmly of what he is writing. So, he plays a tremendous role in the political field where so many passions are aroused. Whichever way you look upon it, a writer of quality—not every person who takes a pen and paper—means a thinker of quality because he is not a writer of quality unless he is a thinker of quality. His role is a highly important one. It has always been so but the world today appears to be gradually forgetting the art of thinking, which is most important.

Much of the writing done today in any part of the world is rapid day-to-day writing. It may, I suppose, partly be the effect of journalism or the rapid output of news everyday, and somebody has to comment on it from day to day, which even affects the language, and language becomes what is called *journalese*. But it is not the fault of journalism. It is really the consequence of the type of life which the world is beginning to lead. Events crowd upon us, one on top of the other, and one has to decide all the time, quickly, whether to do this or that. But one has seldom the time to think. Maybe it is a development, a kind of culmination of the industrial civilization. I am not criticizing industrial civilization; I want a good bit of it in India. Nevertheless, it does appear to be a culmination, just as another culmination of this industrial civilization is the hydrogen bomb. We live in a world where more and more of these things are thought of in terms of pure force and violence and not in terms of argument, thought, reason or logic. That is where the writer should and must play an important part—to make people think in terms other than those rather brutal terms of force and violence. It is not necessary for me to impress on this audience of the members of the P.E.N. the importance of the writer, the poet and the artist, because many of you are writers. But I did wish to say to you what I felt strongly, and this feeling grows stronger as I see this world becoming more and more removed from the habit of thinking. As for the type of books that come out, some of them, no doubt, are good but most of them hardly have much thought behind them. It is a good test to see how many of the books that are published become out of date a year or two later.

So, we have a big job, a big task, before us. Those who are interested in helping Indian literature in its wider sense, in its development as a unit as well as in its separate linguistic compartments, have a task which is important in itself and which has a wider significance (as I have sought to point out to you) in this building up of India, and an even wider significance in trying somehow to influence this world of ours

which moves further and further away from the realms of thought.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this Conference.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

You have listened to the address of my friend Dr. Ramaswami Aiyar. He spoke as the Vice-Chancellor of this University about the importance of Tamil culture and said that the Tamil language—as all languages—represents the soul of a people and it has had a long past, and that it has made effective contributions to Indian culture. He has also mentioned what the University is doing and what it proposes to do and he also posed certain problems to my friend Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, who will take care of them. But the one thing by which I was struck most was that he mentioned that here a course in General Education has been made obligatory for all the students and that it will correct the evils of specialization.

My friend, the Prime Minister, as the Prime Minister of the whole country, developed the need for a common cultural outlook in spite of differences of language. He also spoke about the Five-Year Plan and about how writers must first be thinkers and they must think well before they produce their books if they are to make any kind of impression on either themselves or the world. He spoke about the academy which was recently inaugurated in Delhi, of which you must have heard.

The P.E.N. is a world organization interested in promoting a community of mind which is the essential basis for any kind of stable world order. Its essential purpose is to dispel national hatreds and prejudices and to bring the cultures of the world into greater co-ordination. It is interested in what the Annamalai University is doing for Tamil culture. It is also interested in making us feel loyal to our own inheritance, the inheritance of a great literature, which is essentially universal in its outlook and it is that which

our country and our world stand most in need of. Governments may use power or coercion to bring about changes in the world but if those changes are to be based not on the irrational instincts of man but on rational impulses then they must be based on a new climate of thought which you wish to bring about in this world.

The All-India P.E.N. Centre is now in its 21st year. It was founded in 1933 by Madame Sophia Wadia with her great faith in its possibilities for the cause of world unity and human brotherhood.

The India Centre of the P.E.N. has functioned all these years, promoting unity within and understanding without. It has served as a link between the different linguistic regions of India and as a bridge between India and the other nations of the world. Its one essential objective has been to create a community of mind which is the essential basis for a stable world order.

While governments use power and sanctions to mould events, we use persuasion, we appeal to reason and emotion and use words, spoken or written, to shape the future. We do not serve any nation, faith or ideology. Our cause is humanity and our interest is peace.

Our first President, Rabindranath Tagore, though his inspiration was derived from the spirit of India, spoke of the universal man. In his *Visvabharati* he sought the co-operation of all countries, all creeds and all cultures. His life was spent in the persistent effort to build a new world of human fellowship. For our second President, Sarojini Naidu, Indian culture was not monotonous but rich and full of diversity. India is one in spirit, however diverse in race and creed. Differences of language have not been an impediment to the growth of a common cultural outlook. Both our Presidents were inspired by the vision of human unity. With such examples to guide us, we literary men, poets and playwrights, editors and novelists, should use our gifts to clear the mists of misunderstanding and give to our world, which is shrill and sharp, a friendly countenance and character.

If we wish to bring about radical changes in our patterns of behaviour, we should bring about changes in our modes of thought. We must start revolutions in the minds and hearts of the people.

The Prime Minister in the course of his speech referred to the hydrogen bomb. We live today on the edge of a precipice. The perils of atomic and hydrogen developments dominate our thoughts and trouble our conscience. A great atomic scientist of the United States, when he saw the first atomic blast where the column of flame and smoke rose from the earth and touched the fringe of the atmosphere of the New Mexican city, said that, he was reminded of a passage in the *Bhagavadgita*. He quoted: "If the radiance of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that would be like the splendour of the Mighty one . . . I am become death, the shatterer of the worlds." The effects of the hydrogen bomb are vastly more devastating. Their incalculable destructive power, we feel, will act as a great deterrent to war. But by these threats of limitless horror we are appealing to the baser instincts of human nature: fear, greed and hate.

It is a familiar conception of Indian thought that the human heart is the scene of the age-old conflict between good and evil. It is assailed by weakness and imperfection but is capable also of high endeavour and creative effort. Man is a composite of life-giving and death-dealing impulses, *Vasya chaya amrtam*, *vasya mrtyuh*, whose shadow is immortality and death, as the *Rig Veda* puts it. The *Mahabharata* says:—

*amrtam caiva mrtyus ca dvayam dehe pratishthitam
mrtyur apadyate mohat satyenapadyate amrtam.*

Immortality and death are both lodged in the nature of man. By the pursuit of *moha* or delusion he reaches death; by the pursuit of truth he attains immortality. We are all familiar with the verse in the *Hitopadsha* that "hunger, sleep, fear and sex are common to men and animals." What distinguishes men from animals is the sense of right and wrong. Life and death, love and violence, are warring in every struggling man.

Modern psychology repeats this truth in technical terms. There are two sets of instincts in each human being, those

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which conserve and unify and which are called erotic instincts from the sense which Plato gives to Eros in the *Symposium*, and those which destroy and kill, which are called the aggressive or the destructive instincts. The death instinct functions in every living being, striving to work its ruin in contrast to the erotic instinct which makes for the continuance of life. These two sets of instincts do not work in isolation. They get mixed up like the waters of the river Jumna, the dark daughter of Yama, and those of the river Ganga, issuing forth from the tangled locks of Siva. Destructive instincts are stimulated by an appeal to idealism. Ordinary people are kindly and generous, friendly and co-operative, but by propaganda and indoctrination we can drain their vital springs, call the destructive instincts into play and raise them to the power of a collective neurosis. The cruelties of history are perpetrated in the name of noble causes. The atrocities of the Inquisition, for example, drew their strength from the destructive instincts which were released in the name of religion. In the past, men were infected with the war fever by an appeal to the great causes of freedom and democracy, honour and justice, which often served as a camouflage for the lust for power, religious fanaticism and race prejudice. So all wars were regarded as just and holy wars.

Civilization consists in the gradual subordination of the instinctive life to the sway of reason. It is the duty of independent thinkers who do not yield to pressure or intimidation and who are fervent in their quest of truth to foster the feeling of community and diminish the force of aggressive instincts. When we feel persuaded that the enormous power which nations now possess will act as a deterrent to war, we have in view the little savage, the "old Adam," that lies at the bottom of every human breast. Of all emotions the least compatible with freedom and the most degrading to man is fear. By planting appalling fear in man's hearts, we corrupt their morals and destroy their minds. A London schoolmaster writes:—

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In the bus on the way to school I asked one of our small boys (age 11) what he intended to be when he grew up. He replied, "Sir,

I need not worry, as by that time there will be nowhere to grow up on.”¹

Principal Jacks suggested that the only way to avert war was for both sides to proclaim that they would use all the bombs they had, the moment war started. Field Marshall Lord Montgomery, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, said in a broadcast from London on Tuesday, the 6th of this month, that if a war broke out both sides would use atomic weapons “from the outset.”

President Eisenhower has said:—

As long as the men in the Kremlin know we are in a position to act strongly and retaliate, war is not a decision they would take lightly, but they might do this in a fit of madness or miscalculation.

So we have the fear that some neurotics may seize control of the frightful machinery of war and shatter to bits in an hour all that has been built up in the course of centuries. The power to retaliate does not give us any security. We seem to live in a state of morbid fear, suspicion and hatred.

President Eisenhower, at a Press Conference on March 17, 1954, said:—

The world is suffering from a multiplicity of fears. We fear the men in the Kremlin; we fear what they will do to our friends around them; we are fearing what unwise investigations will do to us here at home as they try to combat subversion or bribery or deceit within. We fear depression; we fear the loss of jobs. All of these with their impact on the human mind make us act almost hysterically, and you find hysterical reaction.²

The great fear, the failure of nerve, the hysterical reaction, are due to lack of faith in the spirit of democracy which we value above life itself. What is the democratic way of life? It includes good faith, tolerance, respect for opinions which we do not share, equal justice for all, the power to speak one's own thoughts, to act according to one's conscience, to do one's duty as one sees it, to live under a government in whose making and unmaking one has a voice, to promote the causes

¹ Mr. R. R. Willis of Bow Brook School, Peopleton, Worcestershire, in *The London Times*, April 5th, 1954.

² *The New York Times*, March 18th, 1954, p. 4

and advance the reforms which command one's devotion, however repugnant they may be to the rulers.

Many of our difficulties are due to the fact that the suppressed peoples are demanding the very liberties which we hold so dear. The unrest in Asia and Africa is proof that democracy is growing and not dying. If we sincerely believe in our professions that all men are created equal, that all persons, irrespective of caste and creed, race and nation, are entitled to the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; if we accept seriously the principles of religion that we are members one of another, that in God there is neither Jew nor gentile, neither Greek nor barbarian; if we are eager to implement the principles of the U.N. Charter; if our faith in democracy is not skin-deep but from the heart's core; then our whole approach to the problems that now divide the world will be very different. We will then stand by the people who are suffering from colonial domination, economic oppression and racial discrimination and strive to bring them relief by removing the hardships which now fetter their lives. These are problems which are independent of Communism. They are natural, indigenous and legitimate. We must face without fear the revolts and revolutions of the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa. If, on the other hand, we defend the exploiters and condemn the exploited, if we persist in ruling the mass of mankind by force and fear, if we compete with one another in depriving the unhappy peoples of the world of hope and faith, we have ourselves to blame for the world situation. If the whole world is living under pressure it is because of our hesitations and compromises.

Peace cannot be had without our paying the price for it. The price can be paid only by those who have something to offer, those who have power and wealth. They should decide not to use their power for the domination of people, not to use their wealth for their corruption. Power and wealth depart from nations as they depart from men. The instances of Assyria, Babylon, Crete, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Spain leap to our eyes. What endures for any nation is what it contributes to the common heritage of all nations, to literature and

arts, to science and government, to freedom and democracy.

In cases of national or ideological conflicts, we should seek not a precarious military solution but a permanent human one. We cannot divide the peoples of the world into blacks and whites. These sharp distinctions which develop feelings of hatred for large sections of humanity are not adequate to human relations. The common people in every country are like ourselves, ordinary human beings, who wish to go about their daily work, do their best for their children, cultivate their own garden and live at peace with their neighbours. If some of them are willing tools of their governments, many are their unwilling victims. Instead of threatening those who are opposed to us with frightful disaster, we should appeal to their higher nature. We may not love each other or like each other; we may at least talk to each other, try to understand each other. We must learn to put ourselves in the place of other peoples and realize how they feel.

On this Easter Friday, it may not be inappropriate to remember that the cross is the symbol of ultimate victory, the swallowing up of death by life. It proclaims that understanding and compassion are more powerful than fire and sword. "Blessed are the meek," those who have patience, humility, understanding and love.

"In my Father's house are many mansions," said Jesus. No nation need assume that it has been cast by heaven for the role of the lord of creation. If there are people who differ from us, our duty is not to fight them but to help to remake them, to open their eyes, to demonstrate to them the sterility of their programmes, to make them aware of the rich horizons of the human spirit. We may have to put up with a good deal of malice and misrepresentation but the democratic way of life requires of us charity and understanding. The glory is not in war but in reconciliation. Since no government in the world desires us all to go down in a common disaster we must try to negotiate. If agreement is impossible, then peace is impossible, but peace does not mean submission to the enemy. Negotiation is not appeasement nor is bomb-rattling diplomacy. Difficulties are there to be faced and

overcome. We may not be able to solve them forthwith. We must learn to live with difficulties. The world cannot be transformed suddenly or magically. Human progress embraces vast stretches of time. There is no need for impatience or discouragement. Failure should not bring forth anger. Error is not crime; it is only youth, immaturity. "When a tree grows up to heaven," says Nietzsche, "its roots reach down to hell." There is no duality between heaven and hell. The opposition is between higher and lower stages of development. When our vision penetrates beyond the stuffy horizons of good and evil, we will be gentle with the frailties of the weak and be stern only with ourselves.

Faith without works is empty. We are not prepared to extend democratic liberties to those who do not possess them. We are not prepared to adopt the democratic spirit in dealing with our adversaries. Infidelity to our own ideals has to be cured if the process of rebarbarization of the world is to be checked.

If, as the French saying has it, war is too important to be entrusted to the generals, we may say that peace is much too fragile to be entrusted to politicians. Our Prime Minister, who has given us a stirring and stimulating address, is not a mere politician. Intellectuals must become aware of their mission to build a universal society, which is truly free and democratic, based on the preciousness of the human soul. Out of the anguish of our times is being born a new unity of all mankind in which the free spirit of man can find peace and safety. We are not the prisoners of destiny. It is in our power to end the fears which afflict humanity, and save the world from the disaster that impends. Only we should be men of a universal cast of mind, capable of interpreting peoples to one another and developing a faith that is the only antidote to fear. The threat to our civilization can only be met on the deeper levels of consciousness. If we fail to overcome the discord between power and spirit, we will be destroyed by the forces which we have had the knowledge to create but not the wisdom to control. For this new effort we need a sense of religious purpose.

In the *Rig Veda*, which is our earliest literary document, we see the face of early India while it was yet dawn from which the bright day has grown. For those early writers literature was the outcome of spiritual discipline, a purging of the emotions, a setting aside of all selfish considerations. That type of experience is a fever in which the mind is on fire and the spirit in exaltation. Literary artists, who are emancipated in their minds and hearts, are the spokesmen of the unborn world unity, based not on fear, greed and hate but on that which is eternal in man, the spirit that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, the spirit that will not be denied.

We are meeting in this sacred place, Chidambaram, which has been famous for centuries in South Indian history. From the sixth century onwards, great Saiva saints like Appar, Jnanasambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar visited the temple and sang the praises of Nataraja. The Chola kings, for four centuries from the ninth century onwards, worshipped Nataraja as their tutelary deity.

The temple is dedicated to one of the five symbols or *panchalinga*. They are (1) the symbol of earth (*prithivi*) at Kanchipuram; (2) the symbol of water (*ap*) at Jambukesvaram; (3) the symbol of light (*tejas*) at Tiruvannamalai; (4) the symbol of air (*vayu*) at Kalahasti; and (5) the symbol of space—ether (*akasa*), having no material representation, at Chidambaram. The Indian spirit does not encourage the proud assertion of human personality but leads our thoughts away from ourselves into the universal life. These five elements are hints of the Infinite which speak to us of a Presence mightier than ourselves.

Absolute Reality transcends the cosmic process and exceeds the categories of the empirical world. It is, therefore, treated as indefinable by linguistic symbols or mental concepts. It is without form and yet is the source of all forms. From the cosmic end the Supreme Reality becomes the cosmic lord, Nataraja, the lord of dance. Nataraja is the manifestation of the lord of the cosmos. He^c is the perfect image of "becoming" as distinct from pure "being." He

symbolizes rhythm, action, movement. God is a creator-artist.

Here in Chidambaram we find a repudiation of cosmic purposelessness, an acceptance of various forms of worship recognized as valid, an insistence on human equality and a participation in the world's upward evolution. These are the beliefs and aspirations of our people, however disloyal some of us may have been to them. It is this disloyalty, false complacency, facile religion and pharisaism that are responsible for the weakness of our social fabric. We should raise our voice against the unbridled might of social, economic and religious reaction. Only when we shake off our internal insufficiencies will it be possible for us to make significant contributions to human welfare.

The events of the last few weeks portend either the end of human history or a turning point in it. This warning is given to us in letters of fire. We recover moral control and return to spiritual life or we pass out as so many other species. Survival demands a change in the spirit of our lives. Let us labour to bring it about while yet there is light: *Kṛnavanto visvam aṛyam*. Let us make the whole world happy.

THE P.E.N.—ITS AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

SHRIMATI SOPHIA WADIA

As we were listening to the distinguished speakers who preceded us, we felt again how richly blessed we are in India, that among our leaders and among our statesmen we have true philosophers, with a vision of the Spirit. They present that vision to us, again and again, and it is for us to support and help them. I am to speak to you about the P.E.N. even though those who preceded me have already done so.

We, of the P.E.N., try to face our responsibility and to feel the common breath of true universality, of the oneness of humanity, that makes us loyal primarily to the values of the Spirit. All that has been said to us carries with it the message which, we hope and trust, not only the P.E.N. fellow members who have come here and the writers who have

assembled here, but also the others who are present, will take to heart. There is none who is so small and humble that he cannot make his own powerful and dynamic contribution to the fulfilment of the dream of all of us, one United World living at peace with "that friendly countenance" about which Dr. Radhakrishnan spoke to us.

Before we proceed with the enunciation of a few principles, may we say one word about Shrimati Sarojini Naidu? We wish to state that the last time we assembled at the Second All-India Writers' Conference in the sacred city of Kashi, at Banaras, we had Sarojinidevi with us. This is the first occasion on which we meet again after her death and we should recall that her passing away has deprived us and the whole world of one who always stood for the oneness of Humanity; of one who was a friend of all peoples and of all nations, excluding no one on the basis of caste or of creed. We salute her memory.

From every one of the speakers of this evening, we have learnt something of value which we should like to repeat, merely reaffirming or re-emphasizing those great values which we are trying to live up to in this All-India Centre of the P.E.N., as in all centres of that World Association of Writers—the International P.E.N.

The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, who is our gracious host and who has made it possible for us to come here for this Conference, has spoken of the work that he is doing in the University, introducing the Humanities as a force to counterbalance lop-sided development along scientific lines, and that, my friends, is the task of literature. We need the idealism of poetry. We need the mellowing, sweetening and benevolent influence of great literature in order to counterbalance the extremes of our age of technology and of scientific advancement and so we rejoice that in this University where we are meeting and where we have been accorded such a gracious and friendly welcome this effort should be made, for it represents one of our ideals and one of our principles.

The Prime Minister spoke to us, and how deeply moved we are that he takes such a genuine interest in the humble

efforts of the P.E.N., about the establishment of the Indian Academy of Letters. It is a great step forward in the cultural and literary life of our nation. We wish to take this opportunity of assuring him that we of the P.E.N. want indeed to help, with all our strength and with all our energy, the work of the Academy, for, we share its ideals and principles. We do not want to duplicate work. We want to strengthen the hands of the Indian Academy of Letters. The Prime Minister also gave us his views on Indian literature. We may have regional languages. They have resulted in the confusion and stress which are inevitable in the transition period, a period during which the passionate love of the mother-tongue sometimes makes us forgetful of the unity of India as a whole. Though we may have regional languages, we cannot have regional literatures. Literature itself, if it is a true literature, must represent the values of the Spirit and those values are universal and impersonal. We have to express Indian literature in different languages but, if that Indian literature is to be true to the past of our country and to the future we are trying to build for our India, it should not be isolated from the great literature of all countries.

We want to stress the freedom for which the P.E.N. stands, helping to build what our Prime Minister referred to as "the dispassionate climate for right thinking." As writers, we should feel our responsibility and know that only in such climate can we really hear the call of the highest within us.

The President of our P.E.N. Centre, Dr. Radhakrishnan, in his eloquent speech, put forth the message which he tirelessly and ceaselessly presents to all of us again and again. That is the message of our common irreducible humanity and the affirmation that our first great loyalty is to the human family as a whole. He said many, many things that we hope our fellow members will take as a message and also actually as a challenge. It is good that, from time to time, we affirm our ideals and also evaluate the achievements of our efforts on the basis of those ideals so that we may rededicate and re-energize ourselves. Again, was it not the Prime Minister who referred to the task of men of literature as being that of

“presenting that true emotion and that true spirit” which can energize and inspire our people? Dr. Radhakrishnan told us how we can fulfil that mission through regenerating our own consciousness and changing our own heart. Only then can we present the message of the Spirit to others who catching the sacred flame, in turn try to change themselves. We, of the P.E.N., are a World Association of Writers and in India, as has been already stated this evening, we have tried to unify our activities always along lines of mutual understanding and mutual appreciation of the good that is being done by others here as in other countries. Each one of us can be a live wire, a spark of light and a dynamic point, and through his own light and through his own work carry the true message of universality to all those with whom he comes in contact.

Now, we need not take time in outlining the activities as such of the P.E.N. All-India Centre. We have done, with the resources available to us, a little good. Besides, the activities of our P.E.N. can but reflect and express our ideals. So, it is the ideals and principles of the P.E.N. that we should like to present to you. Those who are writers among you but not as yet our members may like to know something of the P.E.N. principles, as embodied in our own Charter.

The question has been asked, “why should there be an association of writers who, after all, must act as individuals facing their own responsibilities?” Why, indeed, do they come together? Because they have the same ideals and they respond to the same principles. It is this similarity of outlook and the community of aspirations that bring them together. That was the ideal that brought into existence the International P.E.N. That was also the reason why, with the blessing of our first President, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, whom Dr. Radhakrishnan has already mentioned, we started this P.E.N. All-India Centre in 1933. Twenty-one years of effort lie behind it. It stands for freedom, not just political freedom, not just social freedom, which often degenerates these days into licence, but for moral freedom which depends not on independence or on isolation but on interdependence; on the recognition of the

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oneness of humanity; and on the response to the call of compassion and the breath of true wisdom. We, in the P.E.N., pledge ourselves to do our utmost to bring about— if I may repeat again the happy phrase of Dr. Radhakrishnan— “that friendly countenance,” which the whole world today is in sore need of.

There is much that can be done by the P.E.N. members as by other writers who will respond to those principles and ideals. The work can be that of recreation on the basis of our own traditions and other things contained in the Upanishads, the Puranic stories and other sources. It does not come in conflict with other contributions already made to the richness of our Indian culture. It does not come in conflict with the contributions made by Islam. We should learn to derive inspiration from Sufism and Sufi philosophers and other mystics. We do not have to imitate and we do not have to copy. We have our poets, our short-story writers and our novelists who can recreate great characters in the light of the environment in which they are situated. What about modern India? Is there not much that is being done here which can also inspire our creative writers? The name of Mahatma Gandhi was mentioned by the Vice-Chancellor in his speech. Friends, the history of the India of modern times is the story of the life of that great man, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. And what about the work that is now going on? I mean the work carried on by Vinoba Bhaveji, which should inspire many of our writers. We certainly have a message to give to other nations, and that message should be in accordance with the spirit of Chidambaram, the message of harmony, the message of reconciliation and the message of giving in abundance. We must make the people come together not through coercion, not through compulsion and not even through persuasion of a forceful kind but through a means by which the heart is touched and responds. I could go on in this strain but I do not want to keep you longer than is necessary.

I only want, in closing, to read to you our P.E.N. Charter—our Declaration of Principles. But even a reading of the Charter which embodies the ideals of the P.E.N. will

serve not only as a proclamation but also as a valuable reminder to all of us. Since this Conference is not just a Conference of P.E.N. members, I have talked about our ideals. The P.E.N. has only taken the initiative of organizing this Conference. All of you present here have responded to the very generous invitation of the Vice-Chancellor of this University to participate in this Conference. It is but right that even in a short speech on "The Activities of the P.E.N.," we should read our Charter, a charter which must be observed and adhered to by all writers of all countries who join the P.E.N. We are only the members of the P.E.N. in India. Our Centre belongs to an International World Association of Writers and we feel that India, a united India, a regenerated India, has a message to offer to the rest of the world. We all labour to try and help the forces of light to unite India. For that common goal, a united India, we are labouring in different fields, some in the field of statesmanship and politics and others in the field of literature, and others in many other walks of life, wherever there are men and women of good will. Such an India will carry the power which already our India is showing forth in her foreign policy. People are looking to India, people expect from India the message of the Spirit, universal and impersonal, the message of unity, the message of harmony and the message of interdependence and mutual co-operation. So, if we fulfil our humble task as individuals, we shall help India to become the united India that we want her to become, and that India will be able to fulfil a very responsible and solemn *dharma* to the rest of humanity. And now, to the reading of the P.E.N. Charter:

The P.E.N. Club affirms that

1. Literature, national though it be in origin, knows no frontiers, and should remain common currency between nations in spite of political or international upheavals.
2. In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.

3. Members of the P.E.N. should at all times use what influence they have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations; they pledge themselves to do their utmost to dispel race, class and national hatreds and to champion the ideal of one humanity, living in peace in one world.
 4. The P.E.N. stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations, and members pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong. The P.E.N. declares for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in time of peace. It believes that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organized political and economic order renders a free criticism of administrations and institutions imperative. And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends.
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DR. E. M. WOODMAN (U.S.I.S., Madras)

It had not been my expectation to participate in this function till two minutes ago. At the same time, I would say that it gives me great pleasure and a deep sense of honour to add to the many other expressions made for the success of this conference the best wishes of my Government, the United States Embassy and the United States Consulate in Madras. I do not want to let this occasion go; I take this opportunity to thank Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar of the Annamalai University for his cordial invitation to us. Now, it reminds me not only of the hospitality which we have been receiving in this institution but also of the similar hospitality which we have been receiving whenever we go to Indian colleges and universities throughout the South. That, in turn, reminds me that we in Government service are constantly the guests of India and the Indian Government. We find you always warm and generous and hospitable hosts.

I think, it is particularly appropriate that we should lay emphasis on and talk about the real hovering anxiety, which hangs over us all. Any thinking man would recognize and agree that in the long run the power of the pen is certainly greater

than that of the sword, and that man's ultimate salvation would not lie in his hiding behind the particular mechanism which he invents. It is also particularly encouraging to hear the stirring words of your Charter and to feel the international source of this organization. It is the real responsibility and privilege of the P.E.N. men to write about the culture of other countries. It is time that writers in seeking the oneness in variety helped us to see and to read through one another's eyes. Then we shall no longer look upon one another with amusement or condescension or curiosity or sometimes concealed contempt. Once again, I take this opportunity to convey our sincere best wishes for the success of your endeavours.

MESSAGES

DAVID CARVER

International Secretary of the P.E.N.

Please convey to Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Ramaswamy Aiyar and to the members of the Conference, my warmest wishes for its great success.

JALALUDDIN AHMED

Honorary Secretary, Pakistan Centre

Mr. President, on behalf of the President and members of the Pakistan Centre of the P.E.N. it is my proud privilege to bring to this conference a message of cordial greetings and best wishes.

The need for better mutual understanding and a sympathetic study of conflicting viewpoints is greater today than ever before, and the International P.E.N. with its emphasis on the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations can very well achieve this ideal.

Indeed, the problems engaging the attention of writers, professionally as well as culturally, are very nearly the same everywhere and it is only by getting together and discussing these objectively that we can hope to achieve any solution.

In the end, I once again congratulate the organizers of this conference on their noble venture and convey to them the heartfelt greetings of our Pakistani writers. I hope and believe that the spirit of the P.E.N. Charter, which inspires this august gathering of writers, thinkers and intellectuals, will strike its roots deep into our consciousness and, in the words of the Charter, lead us on to use "what influence we have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations," and to do our utmost "to dispel race, class and national hatreds."

JAMES PUTNAM

General Secretary of the P.E.N. American Centre

I hope that the Conference will be a successful one.

Honorary Secretary, New Zealand P.E.N. Centre

We would be grateful if you would convey the greetings of our New Zealand Centre to the delegates and our cordial good wishes for the success of the Conference.

P.E.N. Clube do Brasil

We beg you to accept our salutations and our best wishes.

Shri C. Rajagopalachari (*Honorary Member*) expressed orally his regret that he would not be able to attend and extended his best wishes for the success of the Conference.

THE HON'BLE MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Honorary Member

Good wishes for the success of the Conference.

Calcutta P.E.N. Members

Wish the Conference all success.

British Council, New Delhi

We take the opportunity of wishing every success to the Third All-India Writers' Conference.

Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University

Best wishes for the success of the Conference.

Vice-Chancellor, Viswa-Bharati

I send you my very best wishes for the success of the Conference.

SHAHID SUHRAWARDY

President, Pakistan Centre of the P.E.N.

Please convey to the organizers of the Conference my greetings and best wishes, on behalf of myself personally as well as the Pakistan P.E.N.

UMASHANKER JOSHI

A P.E.N. Member

I sincerely hope that the Conference will express and strengthen the intrinsic unity of India and enable men and

women of culture to contribute efficaciously to the cause of International Peace and Freedom.

HIS HOLINESS, DHARMAPURAM ADHINAM

Blessings to sponsors—wish function success.

Many of our P.E.N. Fellow Members who had tried their best to attend this Conference wrote to express their regret at not being able to do so and assured us that though not present in body, they were with us in spirit.

Messages were also received from the following:—

SHRIMATI LILAVATI MUNSHI, Lucknow
 SHRI SYED AMIN, Sangli
 THE YUVARAJA OF PITHAPURAM, Madras
 SHRI AMARNATH JHA, Patna
 SHRI DHIRENDRA VARMA, Allahabad
 SHRI BRIJLAL BIYANI, Nagpur
 SHRI M. V. KIBE, Indore
 SHRI M. GOVIND PAI, Mangalore
 SHRI BHABANI BHATTACHARYA, Nagpur
 SHRI M. RAJAMANIKKAM, Madurai
 SHRI G. T. MADHUKOLKAR, Nagpur
 SHRIMATI TARABEN PREMCHAND, Bombay
 SHRI U. K. OZA, New Delhi
 SHRI V. C. LEKHARU, Gauhati
 SHRI M. D. ALTEKAR, Bombay
 SHRI K. G. SAIYIDAIN, New Delhi
 SHRI U. C. PANIGRAHI, Cuttack
 SHRI N. C. MEHTA, Bombay
 SHRI L. N. MOHANTY, Cuttack
 SHRI CHANDRASEKAR, New Delhi
 SHRI KARIMUTHU THIYAGARAJAN
 SHRI R. P. MASANI, Bombay
 SHRI C. N. MENON, Banaras

*List of P.E.N. Members who have passed away since
October 1947*

NAME	DATE OF PASSING
Shri Kanti Chandra Ghosh	May 1948
Prof. P. Ramanathan	November 1948
Shri Indra Shankar Misra	November 1948
Shri S. A. Brelvi	January 1949
Shrimati Sarojini Naidu	March 1949
Mahakavi U. S. Parameswara Aiyar	June 1949
Shri Ramana Dasa K. S. Seshagiri	August 1949
Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar	November 1949
Dr. Sachidananda Sinha	March 1950
Shri Harischandra B. Bhatt	May 1950
Shri Faiz B. Tyabji	December 1950
Kalapurapurna Dr. Vikrama Deo Varma	April 1951
Dr. C. Narayanan Rao	June 1951
Principal V. N. Bhushan	October 1951
Prof. S. S. Basawanal	December 1951
Shri K. S. Venkatramani	February 1952
Diwan Bahadur Hiralal L. Kaji	September 1952
Shri D. K. Shastri	October 1952
Shri Suryanarayan Sadhu	October 1952
Shri Ram L. Gogtay	January 1953
Shri Somnath H. Sarma	January 1953
Vidyabhushan Shri D. K. Bhardvaj	February 1953
Shri A. F. Khabardar	July 1953
Shri Chandrashankar Shukla	October 1953

DEWAN BAHADUR K. M. JHAVERI

On behalf of the P.E.N. All-India Centre, I propose a cordial vote of thanks to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for having taken the trouble to inaugurate the proceedings of this conference. By instinct Panditji is more inclined towards literature than towards politics. As proof of this statement, I can quote a couple of instances. Panditji has already come into the front line of writers and he has written many books. Recently, there was a meeting of the Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi. I was also present at that meeting. In spite of an indisposition, Panditji presided over the meeting, and led it to a successful conclusion. The P.E.N. is fortunate in having two distinguished scholars this evening to encourage it: I mean Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The third party who has contributed most to the holding of this conference by his co-operation and help is Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. I have also to thank the Governor for having taken the trouble to come here and take part in the proceedings.

PART II

SECOND DAY : Saturday, 17th April 1954

MORNING SESSION

Chairman : DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

I have very great pleasure in requesting His Excellency Shri Sri Prakasa to declare open the Book Exhibition. We have sought, in connection with the P.E.N. Conference, to bring together certain specimens of literature from the East and the West. The American Embassy, the British Council and certain other organizations have helped us with the loan of a few publications. We have also got loans from friends of priceless palm-leaf manuscripts and we have put a special show-case for the manuscripts connected with the *Kamba Ramayanam* of which this University is attempting to produce an authoritative edition. I shall have to speak for a few moments on that work a little later when the symposium on "The Influence of the Ramayana on Regional Literatures" takes place here. We have also brought together pictures of leading South Indian writers. You will find them on the walls. We have also brought together some specimens of art of all the ages. You will therefore, see some representative literary, artistic and pictorial collections before you. I request His Excellency Shri Sri Prakasa to declare this Exhibition open.

Dr. Radhakrishnan will, in his capacity as the President of the P.E.N., preside over the symposium that will follow, but we are expecting a few words now from him also. Looking at his rather dazed face, I think he has been taken by surprise but I think we should all join in giving him that surprise.

SHRI SRI PRAKASA

Though I am no member of the P.E.N. Conference for which you have assembled here, not belonging to any of the

categories of human beings under "P" or "E" or "N," I am particularly grateful to the Vice-Chancellor of the University for having arranged this function on behalf of the University so that the Chancellor may have a chance to participate. I deem it a great honour, indeed, to be called upon to open this exhibition of books. The history of our country, I think, is unique in the way in which it expresses and describes the fundamental unity of our culture throughout the ages. At the same time, it also shows innumerable political conflicts. And states and kingdoms have been constantly torn and re-formed throughout the centuries during which we have functioned as a people, though cultural unity has always been present. But in the British days, for some reason or other, that process seems to me to have changed. We had political unity and one government throughout the country, but this unity was accompanied by constant cultural conflicts. While we became one in politics, we became many on the cultural front, and groups and provinces struggled in order to establish and vindicate their own individualities in culture and allied matters.

The influence of the English language has been great on us. It has certainly helped in cementing the bonds of our political unity. As many persons learnt English in almost all the Indian provinces, there also grew up, so far as the political side of life was concerned, a great deal of understanding between the citizens of all these provinces. But we never worried to learn each other's languages. We all concentrated on the English language and even very close associates in the political field did not really know each other on the cultural side. Let me give a small example. There is my State or Uttar Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, it is said to its credit, has always welcomed persons from all other provinces except its own. There used to be an eminent Bengali politician in Lucknow of the name of Shri A. P. Sen who was, as some of you may recollect, a very well-known lawyer and politician. At the same time there lived the great journalist Shri Srivai Chintamani, the editor of the *Leader*, Allahabad. Both these persons were very closely connected with each other in the

political field in Uttar Pradesh, but neither knew the other in his cultural life, and it was only towards the end that Shri Chintamani realized with a shock that Shri Sen, his life-long friend, was a great poet in the Bengali language. Similarly, Shri Sen did not know of the religious and spiritual aspirations of Shri Chintamani. We were all really concentrating on the English language. That was practically the only language we knew besides our own. And while we all respected the English tongue and took great pains to learn it correctly, we had a certain amount of contempt, if I should be so frank, for the languages of our sister provinces. In my unfortunate State of Uttar Pradesh, they actually said—my friend here will pardon me for letting out the truth—that Tamil was a language akin to the sounding of pebbles when shaken in a brass vessel. Since I have been here, I can testify that it is nothing of that sort. In fact, for the sake of my own personal safety, I am bound to say so.

I must confess with sorrow and shame that before I came to Madras, I had not heard of Kamban or Thiruvalluvar or Thyagaraj or of the many great poets and writers of whom Tamil Nad very justly boasts. Now, in the set-up of Swaraj, we have two tendencies very much in the fore. We want to appreciate the past and we are also anxious to build our great future. There is certainly a great desire to know each other though I must, at the same time, confess that when we have obtained political unity, many fissiparous tendencies have also been set afloat to divide us which well-meaning folk are anxious to avoid.

From what I have read about the exhibition that I am about to open, I think it symbolizes the noble aspirations of the best minds of today, who are naturally distressed and disturbed at those tendencies that are likely to divide us. So far as I have been able to find out, the history of our regional languages in the recent past has been very singular. We have drawn our themes from two main sources. There is the Bhakti school of the old variety with its philosophy and its ecstatic thought. That has given us many things. Then, there are

the political, the domestic, the economic and the social idealisms that we have borrowed from the West, and most of the literature in our languages depicts one or the other aspect of life. Individually also, for spiritual solace we go to our Bhakti school of thought and think of the old gods and what they mean to us. But for the organization of our mundane life, we go to the West and borrow from it the various ideals that it stands for. Therefore, so far as my little knowledge goes, I find that poets and playwrights, I do not know why, send their books to me for a foreword or an introduction; and when I write to them and ask them if they cannot have newer themes to write about, more in consonance with actual life, they feel that I am talking about something that I should not talk about. So, poets and playwrights have concentrated on philosophy and on the spiritual side of life.

So far as the essayists and editors are concerned, I think they have concentrated on the material aspect of life and very few editorial articles pertain to spirituality, but they all deal with the many necessary needs of our social, political and economic lives.

Now, after I have disposed of "P" and "E" in P.E.N., I find myself confronted with "N." The novelists have been in a particularly embarrassing position. They have very often described their feelings in an imaginary light, for most of the heroes of our novelists do not really exist on earth. That, to my mind, expresses the conflict that must be in the minds of those who write stories, whether short or long. They seem to think of both these trends of thought. They find that the innermost spring of aspiration of their heroes is ancient philosophy. But they have to function in the world of today into which so many conflicts have been introduced by western thoughts. So, our novels present to us pictures which we are not able to recognize in life. Like many of you, I too am still fond of reading stories. The value of a story, to my mind, is that it should describe actual life and thought and present the hero in an idealistic setting as well. To write a story cannot be an easy task. I have never been able to write

one myself. How other people are able to write stories I cannot understand. But the conflict is there without a doubt. Whether you see an Indian story on the screen or read it in a book I do not think that you get much help from it as you doubtless do if you read European novels and stories. So, we have a difficult task before us.

While I gratefully accept your invitation to declare the educational exhibition open, I express the fervent hope that the conflicts of today will end and a way will be found for the true unity of our land leading to the great consummation of the fundamental oneness of the world.

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

A University, there is no doubt, should promote study and research. Just as study and research in Science depend on laboratories, study and research in the Humanities depend on libraries, books, manuscripts and other things. It is, therefore, very appropriate that this University should specialize in the literature of the Tamils and bring together books and manuscripts relating to that literature. That is what Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has done here.

The Governor, your Chancellor, spoke to you about the conflicts with which we are faced. Many people suffer from a nostalgia for the past while others think in terms of the present. Here, again, so far as science, technology and other things are concerned, we have to look to modern developments. These are perpetually progressing, but so far as fundamental values are concerned, not only in this country but in every country, people turn to their own classics. That is what is happening everywhere. So, it is not inconsistent for us to have some respect for the classics and also some love for modern learning. These two will have to go together if we have to make any kind of progress. Our attitude toward the classics and our ancient heritage must be one of respect tempered by criticism, respect because those values which have come down to us have enabled us to survive till today in spite of all the

vicissitudes through which we have passed, and criticism because we are living so little and our lives are more or less an apologetic letter. We will have to acquire greater strength and greater virility in capturing the ideals of the past and reorienting them to the needs of the present. That is the task that is left for this generation. An ancient truth says: *nayam atma balaheenena labhyah*. Then, commenting on *bala*, Sankara says: "*Atma nishta janita veeryahcenena*." It means that it is not physical strength but spiritual power that we have to recapture. When once we recapture that spiritual power, material problems will not offer much difficulty so far as their solution is concerned. Things go down to ideals and if we have the right type of ideals, I have no doubt that we will be able to establish our supremacy over the material world. So, there is a place in any University for books, for exhibitions and for the study of classics just as there is a place for science and technology.

It is a modern, competitive world that we are living in. We have so many gifts of Nature. But if this material wealth is to be transformed into real human wealth and welfare, the study of science and technology is absolutely essential. We cannot neglect it. But, if we merely concentrate on the study of science and technology, the world will be reduced to a nightmare and we will all become *rakshasas*. That will be the natural result of it. That is why we are insisting upon a harmonious development of the different sciences and upon the study of classics and the Humanities on the one side and science and technology on the other. So, nostalgia for the past and love for modernism are not inconsistent with each other and we stand up for both these.

We are very thankful to Shri Sri Prakasa for the trouble he has taken in coming here and declaring this Exhibition open.

SHRI R. V. SESHAYYA

It is now my pleasant duty to convey, on behalf of the Working Committee, our grateful thanks to His Excellency

Shri Sri Prakasa for the scholarly address he has given us. He was complaining that he was not a member of the P.E.N. But if the P.E.N. members have no objection to call themselves by the plural designation P.E.N.s, he can be a member because he is a scholar. We are grateful to him for his scholarly address, which reflected the humour we always associate with him.

To my esteemed Chief, the Vice-Chancellor, our grateful thanks are due not only for the suggestions he has been giving to me every now and then but for placing at our disposal his valuable treasure of art books.

The presence of Dr. Radhakrishnan is always inspiring and his speeches always elevate us on to another plane. I need not make a special mention of our indebtedness to him.

The organizing of this Exhibition, which has been done within a very short time, has been of very great educative value to me, the Convener. For one thing, to organize a book exhibition is difficult because in these days there is an uncontrolled multiplicity of books and to make a choice is difficult. I had also to remember that I was arranging a book exhibition to satisfy and fulfil the aims and aspirations of the P.E.N. I remembered that the P.E.N. had no barriers, spiritual or temporal, and that literature was in the realm of spirit and mind where no barriers exist. I have tried to carry out these aims but there may be shortcomings, and I crave the indulgence of one and all of you for such shortcomings and lapses.

As I have said, the organizing of this exhibition was of great educative value to me. I was very glad to receive the co-operation of people from every corner. I must thank the members of the British Council, the authorities of the Adyar Library and those who undertook to arrange the Bharati Exhibition. I must also thank those in charge of the various departments of study and the library. I also extend my thanks to the Professor of Tamil and to the various members of the University staff. It was very pleasant to receive so much goodwill and co-operation from every corner. I thank one and all.

SYMPOSIUM ON "THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON THE REGIONAL LITERATURES"

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

The subject of the symposium that has been announced for discussion this morning is the "Influence of the *Ramayana* on the Regional Literatures." All these years, the P.E.N. has been working for unity within and understanding without, unity within meaning that we get to know one another and have the same ideals as far as possible. The fact that the *Ramayana* is translated into almost all the main languages in India indicates how fundamental is the unity of the spirit, irrespective of the impediments of language. Language difficulties may be present but the spirit of the *Ramayana* has been there and it has been directing all the peoples of this country into the possession of a common outlook on life. We know that when Gandhiji spoke about the future of India he used to call it "*Rama Rajya*." *Rama Rajya* is the Indian equivalent of the Christian expression the "Kingdom of God." It means a kingdom where every individual would have killed, so to say, the hydra-headed monster in him and asserted the supremacy or the sovereignty of the Divine principle. If there is a war or conflict in the human individual, Ravana represents evil and Rama the principle of good. The purpose of the *Ramayana* is to help us to overcome evil and, as far as possible, behave as decent human beings. The ideals of Rama and Sita have captured the imagination of all the peoples of this country. However much attempts may be made to dislodge them from the minds of our people, I have no doubt that the strong hold which these ideals have will continue to be there.

You will also see that the ideals which are set forth are for both men and women. For men there is Rama and for women, Sita. So far as Sita is concerned, she had suffered, struggled and attained her salvation. It means that there is no progress for us except through suffering. All the great people of the world—men or women—have had to suffer before they were able to attain their own particular destiny.

The *Ramayana* has been written in all languages. Some of you may know the beautiful words which Kalidasa uses in *Raghuvamsa* about Sita. . . . She carried out that ideal even though she had to pass through hell. All these things prove to us that the greatness of man consists in self-conquest and in nought else. That is what the *Ramayana* stands for.

I do not wish to take much of your time. Shrimati Sophia Wadia has been the real director of the P.E.N. organization. She has been the guiding spirit, the soul, so to say, of the Indian P.E.N. Centre from its original establishment in 1933 to this day. Though there have been presidents, the main work is undertaken by her and we owe her a debt of gratitude for the work which she has done for the betterment of the country through the P.E.N. organization.

In the absence of Shri Kaka Kalelkar, who is unfortunately engaged in some other work in far away Japan, we have in our friend Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar a great student not only of the *Ramayana* in Sanskrit but the *Ramayana* in Tamil and possibly in other languages also, probably Malayalam. If you wish to hear someone who can speak with great authority on this subject and with a knowledge of the *Ramayana* in different languages, it will not be possible for you to get one better than Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. I have great pleasure in asking him to open this symposium. After his speech, other people, I am afraid, will have to be content with ten minutes; and in ten minutes, if we have the power, we can say many things. So ten minutes will be the maximum for subsequent speakers and Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar has the law in his own hands.

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

The concluding sentence of Dr. Radhakrishnan's speech is a challenge and a warning. I propose to take the warning seriously and not trespass materially beyond that period of ten minutes which he prescribed for all the speeches and which he half-heartedly waived in my case. I am labouring

under this difficulty today because, frankly, I have not prepared myself for the speech. Till yesterday I was told that the symposium would be opened by an illustrious student of the *Ramayana* and of literature generally. I am a last-minute stop-gap and I propose to consider myself and treat myself in that light, notwithstanding the all too flattering statements made by our large-hearted President.

There is one thing that is peculiar to this country of India to an extent almost unprecedented in the world, it is that it has been a country which has been profoundly influenced by its writers, its seers and its spokesmen in religious and in every other sphere. Some people, like those belonging to the great Islamic Brotherhood, have called themselves the "People of the Book." Similarly, Christians have their one Book, which affords them all the consolation and all the solace that their minds and hearts desire. But, perhaps, to a greater extent than any other country, this country may claim to be ruled by its scriptures, epics and Puranas. The influence exercised by the Vedas and the Upanishads, though everybody has not directly participated in reading their contents, is great. The substance of the Vedas and the Upanishads, as they have been modified and presented to us in our epics and Puranas, has been the mental and spiritual texture of our country. During my travels abroad, I have always been put the question, "How will India solve her problems notwithstanding the 'illiteracy'—and I am using the word 'illiteracy' within inverted commas—and ignorance of the masses?" My answer has been and will be that the literacy of India is not a literacy of the eye but a literacy of the ear. The *Kathakaras*, the *Bhagavatars*, the itinerant minstrel-teachers, have produced the substance of our scriptures and books. We live on them and by them. The *Ramayana* has, perhaps, exercised the most formative influence. Side by side with the *Mahabharata* it stands as the inspirer and the stimulus of the thought and aspirations of India.

Sir, you have referred to the great characters of Rama and Sita. I have, in the course of my study of the *Ramayana*, also remembered characters like Bharata and Hanuman who,

to my mind, are perhaps rarer typifications of certain aspects of character than even Rama and Sita. A character like Bharata, face to face with temptations, face to face with the realization of all normal ambitions, who spurns everything for the sake of brotherly love and adherence to *dharma*; and that great *sishya*—the supreme example of loyalty, faith and devotion—Hanuman, are characters, perhaps, as rare in essence, as supreme examples and types, as Rama and Sita themselves.

I would rather, before dealing with the influence of the *Ramayana* on regional literatures, speak about certain aspects of not only the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* but also of our other epics and Puranas. Generally, they represent the sum total of Indian life at its tensest, at its most glorious peaks of achievement, aspiration and yearning. They also represent in their characters the temptations of India, the besetting difficulties of India, the obstacles—mental and spiritual—that our country had to face not only at the gaming table where the Pandavas lost their kingdom, but also on other occasions. To me the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are valuable as national warnings as well as exemplars. They indicate to us that from early times we have had these fissiparous tendencies, these difficulties of division and sub-division, quarrels and jealousies. There have been in our history some rare moments when these have been transcended and *Chakravartis* like Rama and his predecessors have made a great united and spiritually coherent country.

But to me the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are examples of the possibilities of weakness. I am reminded of one saying of Sita in this connection. When unjust doubts were cast upon her, she, born with the high spirits which co-existed in her—the *kshatriya* spirit co-existing with a supreme devotion to the matrimonial idea—asked a question: "*Prakruthaha Prakruthamiva?*" That means, "How dare you think of me as an ordinary person liable to these temptations, which you ascribe to me, and thus for a moment lower yourself?"

Now, my good friends, these examples of human character

at its highest also furnish us with other reactions. Our epics and our Puranas are an object lesson to the whole world in the difficulties and perils of a search for power. In the case of Hiranya, in the case of Ravana and in the case of Bali Chakravarti, we have instances of greatness, temporal magnificence and glory obscured by some one besetting sin whereby all the compositeness and the integrity of the personality are lost. I shall give only one instance, that of Ravana.

Readers of the "*Kishkindha Kanda*" (canto) and "*Sundara Kanda*" of the *Ramayana* will realize something that happened, which is very often referred to by people in the Tamil land. Hanuman goes to Lanka and sees Sita in the garden. He does not know how to talk to her in Sanskrit, the language of refinement and culture in those days, what other language should he choose? He asks himself the question: "What if I speak in Sanskrit?" He says: "If I do speak in Sanskrit—this appears in "*Kishkindha Kanda*"—it is likely that Sita may distrust me because Sanskrit is the language of Ravana. Ravana is the son of a Brahmin and naturally he speaks Sanskrit. If, therefore, I speak in Sanskrit I may be taken for a disguised spy of Ravana. Therefore, I propose to speak in a *madhura* (sweet) language and it will be the tongue of the ordinary commonfolk." One great Tamil scholar has stated that that sweet tongue which is not Sanskrit must be Tamil. The argument is impossible to combat. You have the argument as follows: After all, Rama and Sita did spend a lot of time in the Dhandaka forests. In the Dhandaka forests they went from hermitage to hermitage, from Nasik up to Rameswaram. Then in those days what was the sweet language other than Sanskrit which he could have thought of and which Sita must have learned? Naturally in her sojourn in the South she learnt the Tamil language. Hanuman knew it. Therefore, he decided not to speak in Sanskrit but in Tamil. The authority for this is found in "*Kishkindha Kanda*," in "*Sundara Kanda*," and I do not want to speak further in a light-hearted vein.

The *Ramayana* has profoundly influenced the whole of India with the result that it may be said, without fear of

contradiction, that the literature of most of the regional languages is coterminous, synonymous with their renderings, their translations, their adaptations of the *Ramayana* story more even than any other Purana. Take, for example, the Tulsidas *Ramayana*. The whole of that civilization, what we call the Hindi civilization—the Hindi background of culture—is bound up with the Tulsidas *Ramayana*. I see before me Shri Chandrasekharan who has recently done some fine work in this comparative collation of the *Kamba Ramayanam* and the Tulsidas *Ramayana* in juxtaposition with and by comparison and contrast with the Valmiki *Ramayana*. These three great poets—Kambar, Valmiki and Tulsidas—have rendered the same story. The main outlines of the story are well known and are universal in appeal and in their main incidents. But in description, in particular references, in the way in which for instance Sita's betrothal is referred to, whether Sita bent her head down or whether she slyly looked at Rama, and with regard to such matters there are differences of poetic treatment. But, generally speaking, the main story is the same. But the descriptions of scenery, descriptions of the background and the idea of the proper regiment of life are differently conceived by these three different writers. They are united in one aim but different in the manner of treatment. But, nevertheless, Hindi stands by Chathurthi *Ramayana* and many other reductions and adaptations.

In Tamil the process is different. Tamil possessed long before the *Kamba Ramayanam* a very great literature, some of which has been lost. Those who have come from countries other than from the Tamil land will realize that the one great tradition of the Tamil country is that there were academies, P.E.N. Conferences in those ancient days. Four or five thousand years ago, P.E.N. Conferences were held in what was called South Mathura, which is now under the sea. There is a common tradition that a part of Lanka went under the sea. There is a Tamil tradition that the old continent of Mouriya which extended from Africa, through Madagascar, through the Indian Ocean, included India and went on to the Far East up to Borneo and Java. All that formed one big land

mass which was overwhelmed by a flood and that flood is supposed to have overwhelmed South Mathura also, where the first Academy was held and in which Augustiar, the Vedic seer, took part. Augustiar is supposed to have colonized the South and brought about that osmosis of culture which is today the culture of South India. Its literatures comprise a great deal of grammar, of rhetoric and what may be called Saivaite, Vaishnavite and Devi worship also. The difference between the North and the South is this: Tamil literature is widely different in outlook from Sanskrit literature. It is different in the sense that whereas not so much importance was paid to what may be called the ordinary arts of life there was a certain detachment, a certain looking away, a certain aloofness from the world in the main body of Sanskrit literature. Tamil literature was not primarily concerned with asceticism as an end or as a summit of life. Most of the descriptions in Tamil literature refer to the glories of agriculture, the importance of husbandry and, of what may be called, ethical rather than spiritual principles. But with the coming of the *Kamba Ramayanam* there was a tremendous change and departure. The *Kamba Ramayanam* represents what may be called, the fusion of the Northern and Southern spirit, the fusion of what sometimes is called the Aryan civilization and what is sometimes called the Dravidian civilization. We are now beginning to learn that there is no reason to differentiate between the Northern and Southern civilizations. Mohenjo Daro and Harappa have opened our eyes to new vistas. It is neither the time nor the occasion to dwell on this subject. But one thing which I want to emphasize is this, viz., that the *Kamba Ramayanam* is the apotheosis of the ideal, of the possible unification of the spirit, endeavour and aspiration of every part of India with those of every other part of India. That, to my mind, is the lesson, the main lesson, which is derived from the *Kamba Ramayanam* where the Tamil spirit, glorying in the possession of a very ancient literature, was nevertheless willing to assimilate other elements and produce a rich and composite texture, which was of the greatest value to the development of our Indian civilization.

The *Kamba Ramayanam* has been greatly commented upon. We are in this University now engaged in the task of producing a worthy and authoritative edition of this work.

We are attempting to collect at this centre all the manuscripts, the various priceless receptacles of research and learning. We are bringing together palm-leaf manuscripts and other receptacles of the traditional storehouses of knowledge as well as notes and comments so that we may have a definite text of the *Kamba Ramayanam*. Not only in the Tamil land but wherever you go, to the Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada or any other linguistic area, you will find that the texture of the literary life of those regions has been based upon the material furnished by the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The extent to which the regional languages have developed may be said to be proportionate—maybe directly proportionate—to the extent to which they have imbibed the spirit of the old classics and have made them a part of their own life, assimilating their own elements with the elements of these epics. It is from that point of view and as the triumphant result of a gradual, steady and continuous osmosis of culture and of thought that we should look at these epics of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. I am using a scientific word, osmosis, which means two liquids combining together, so that their separate existences may not be differentiated. It is that osmosis of culture, which the *Ramayana* is bringing about along with the *Mahabharata* in the regional languages and their literatures, that I would like to put before you.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON ASSAMESE LITERATURE

PROF. U. C. LEKHARU

The influence of the *Ramayana* on Assamese literature has been far-reaching and profound. The tale of Rama portraying the highest ideals has been preserved with great reverence in the hearts of the Assamese people. The marriage songs, lullabies and folk-songs, depicting the life of the people, contain references to the *Ramayana* as well as to the

Mahabharata, the *Benta* and other semi-historic tales. The *Ramayana* has proved a spiritual heaven to people in their weal and woe.

It was in the latter half of the 14th century that a great poet, Madhab Kondoli, first rendered the Valmiki *Ramayana* into Assamese verse at the behest of a Kachari king, named Maha Manikya. He was the first *Ramayana* poet to have used the provincial Aryan language of northern India. Though primarily written for the satisfaction of a monarch, it attracted listeners from all corners of the kingdom. The poet's sole objective was to render the Valmiki *Ramayana* as a *kavya*. In doing this he did not translate it word by word or sloka by sloka but kept intact the theme and spirit of the work. He sometimes enlarged the descriptions, making them very elaborate, and sometimes condensed the facts. He infused local colour into the descriptions, which made the work homely and more comprehensible to the people.

Showing extraordinary skill, he employed similes and metaphors, which he either borrowed from the Sanskrit original, the provincial language or himself coined. An infinite variety of rhymes and a kind of verse, which has an easy, natural flow, are employed in the descriptions of nature, which reflect a highly developed poetic imagination. There is, however, a tendency to coarseness in some of the verse, induced, no doubt, by a desire to pander to the masses. Thus Madhab Kondoli's *Ramayana* is interesting not only as an Assamese rendering of the Valmiki *Ramayana* but also as a mirror of the local mental climate of the period. The poet had in view the society for whom the work was intended.

In those days, as even now, mass education and entertainment were brought to the masses by the Ojha-Palis, a body of singers who were either independent or attached to some shrines or temples. These minstrels are still to be found in Assam. Heretofore, episodes from the *Mahabharata*, the story of Satee Beula and the semi-historic heroes of local repute had formed the themes of the Ojha-Pali songs. To this mass of literature was added the great epic of the *Ramayana*

from a very able hand and this greatly enriched the literature of the time.

For a century the master poet's work was read and recited till another poet, Durgabar, hailing from Nitachal (Kamakhya), brought out a concise edition, predominant in songs, generally known as the *Giti Ramayana*. He and many other poets were inspired in later years to write according to the need of the times. Ananta Kondoli, a contemporary of Sri Sankardev who flourished in the 16th century, refers to the work of Madhab Kondoli in his own version and liberally borrows from him expressions and *padas*. Sri Sankardev himself mentions in his "*Uttarakanda*" the name of Madhab Kondoli and his *Ramayana* describes him as a flawless poet and takes him as an ideal in the matter of composition. Thus Madhab Kondoli's influence on later writers can easily be traced.

How the *Ramayana* served in evolving different types of literature and how it became a vehicle for propagating faiths will be seen from the following discussion. Madhab Kondoli's *Ramayana* was primarily secular in expression and it was done in verses which had different rhymes. But his successor who came a 100 years later made it a book of songs and music. That the art of music had acquired a high level in those days may be seen from the fact that the songs—each independent and yet woven into the whole—contained different tunes. The poet indicated the *ragas*, which are all Aryan tunes. There are altogether 17 tunes, their localized Aryan names being, *Belawar*, *Barari*, *Gunjari*, *Dhanastri*, *Ramgiri*, *Ahir*, *Patamanjari*, *Bhatiali*, *Vasanta*, *Suhai*, *Manjari*, *Megha Mandal*, *Devamohan*, *Sri Gandhakali*, *Marwar*, *Debajini*, *Akasmandali*.

This *Ramayana* was more concise than that of Madhab Kondoli and sought to make the facts of the *Ramayana* more effective through the skilful selection of scenes and the aid of music. The poet also made some concessions to mass psychology by giving a judicious twist to some of the incidents. Also belonging to this category were the *Benta* songs and

the *Usa Parinaya* and *Rakminiharana*, compositions from the *Haribansa*.

The poet Durgabar flourished during the reign of the Koch King Viswasinha (1515-1540), father of King Narayanaraya (1540-1585 A.D.).

The 14th and 15th centuries were marked throughout India by a religious revival. During this period Ramananda, Kabir, Bakabhacharyya, Namadeva and Sri Chaitanya preached the Bhakti cult in different parts of India. In Assam Sri Sankardeva (1449-1569 A.D.) preached his *Eka Sarava Nam Dharma* which was based on the *Bhagawat Purana* and the *Gita*. Sri Sankardeva preached the Krishna cult and proclaimed himself a disciple of Krishna. He built up a great literature in consequence of his religious zeal, and a number of gifted devotees and poets worked with him. To Sri Sankardeva, Rama was no other than Krishna himself. Sankardeva and his disciples and co-workers took for their literary sources the *Bhagawat Purana*, the *Gita*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Haribansa* primarily. The *Ramayana*, so extensively popular, was also soon made instrumental in the propagation of the Krishna cult. The great work of Madhab Kondoli mentioned above was taken up and infused with the spirit of the *Bhagawata Purana*. Ananta Kondoli, a follower and contemporary of Sankardeva, undertook this task. In the following lines he explains why he did so when Madhab Kondoli's work was already in existence:—

Madhab kondoli biracita Ramayana.
Taka suni amara kantuka kare mana.
Ramara samanya santa katha yathavata
Bhajania guna yata nabhaita vekata.
Etake yatan karo bhakatera pade
Nubutiba ninda sada suna sabhasade.
Saksate Parama Brahma janiba Sri Rama.

Freely translated, it reads: "Madhab Kondoli wrote the *Ramayana*. I am inspired on listening to his work. He wrote the simple facts of Rama's life but he has not dwelt upon the devotional aspect. So I make the attempt for the sake of *bhakti* and I entreat the audience not to take offence.

You should know Rama as the Absolute Brahman himself." At another place again he has said:—

Ramayana katha pade nibandhilo
Bhagawata carca kare.

"I have made verses of the *Ramayana* by discussing the *Bhagawata*."

It will be seen that in this religious revival also the *Ramayana* played a very important part and almost became a part of the *Bhagawata*. The work which served in other places to propagate the Rama cult was in Assam made an instrument for spreading the cult of Krishna. Madhab Kondoli's massive work was, however, not totally ignored or obliterated. So the great masters of the neo-Vaisnavism, Sri Sankara and his disciple Sri Madhabdeva, while retaining the body intact, supplemented the *Uttara* and the *Adi Kandas* with the five *kandas* of Madhab Kondoli. Sri Sankara also composed a one-act play entitled *Rama Vijaya* or *Sita Sayambara*. In both his *Ramayana kanda* and the play, Sri Sankara is seen proceeding from Rama to Krishna. The identity of Krishna and Rama being established, the poets devised other means of making the *Ramayana* fit for daily recitals like Sri Sankardeva's *kirtan*, which extols Krishna's suzerainty. A poet named Ananta Thakur Ata, also known as Kayastha Hridayananda, actually wrote a *kirtan* on Rama after the style of Sri Sankara's *kirtan*. Thakur Ata was himself a religious guru and fifth in generation from Sri Sankardeva. His work was accepted with great reverence by the Vaisnavas and was recited at fixed hours (*prasangas*) of the day. Like his fore-runners, while describing the activities of Rama, Thakur Ata goes on to sing the praises of Lord Krishna.

Towards the later part of the Vaisnava epoch the writing of prose made its appearance. Sri Sankardeva and Madhabdeva, both employed prose for their one-act plays but these were sprinkled with Brajawati words. A hundred years later came Bhattadeva, a great religious guru, who rendered the whole of the *Bhagawata Purana* and the *Gita* into Assamese.

prose in a very simple and lucid style. The biographies of the saints began to be written in prose along with those in verse. Secular histories were also written side by side in the spoken language. The *Ramayana* also did not lose ground. A century later, after Bhattadeva, a religious guru named Raghunath Mahanta, wrote the *Ramayana* in prose. These are the main forms in which the *Ramayana* made its appearance. Incidents from the *Ramayana* also figure in plays like Ananta Kondoli's *Sitar Patal Prabes* and Sri Madhabdeva's *Rama Bhawna*.

Besides these, one finds in Assamese literature some minor works based on folklore, legend as well as on incidents from the *Ramayana*. These are very popular among the masses but do not seem to be literal translations from any original Sanskrit work. They have their counterparts in Bengali and generally concern themselves with the powers of *Tantra* and *Yoga*. Said to have been written sometime in the 12th or 13th century, they were later subjected to the Vaisnava faith. *Satrunjaya*, a work written by Raghunath Das, describes the powers and victories of Bali. In Bali's expedition, Narakasura of Kamarupa had to take part. He followed the path of *Yoga* and reached the place of the monkey King Malayaja with his soldiers. The Assamese of the *Adbhuta Ramayana* has a different version from that of the Sanskrit work of the same title. Here is described the prowess and *yogic* might of Hanuman. *Mahi Ravana Badha* written by Chandra Bharati describes the power of magic and also the might of Hanuman. It shows how Hanuman destroyed the goddess Candi, killed Mahi Ravana and rescued Rama and Lakshmana from the nether regions. *Ganak Carit* is another work which narrates how Hanuman, in the guise of an astrologer, frustrated the purpose of Ravana who invented a novel device for winning Sita's hand.

The stories mentioned above are not to be found in Valmiki's original work but to the masses they are very real.

The *Adhyatma* and the *Yoga-Vasistha Ramayanas* seem to have had no influence on Assamese literature.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON BENGALI LITERATURE

SHRI NARENDRA DEV

We all know that the *Ramayana* is ancient India's earliest epic, when Sanskrit was the universal language of the land. A superb creation, it is the work of Maharshi Valmiki who is rightly called "*Adi-kavi*"—the first poet of saintly merit. He wrote it in such an entrancing style that it at once captured the heart of the people.

India is a land of thinkers sincerely devoted to religion and the spiritual life. Since Vedic times we find, running side by side in this vast country, a strong undercurrent of poetry and a passion for the sublime expressed by the great philosophers of this mysterious land. They have composed beautiful poems to give expression to the realization of the highest truth of all times, such as the Upanishads, Tagore's *Gitanjali* and Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*.

The *Ramayana* is the most inspiring epic of India. It depicts in detail the extraordinarily ideal life of the illustrious King Ramachandra and provides historical glimpses of the royal family of Ayodhya. Since the day when Kusha and Lava, the twin sons of the exiled queen Sita, sang it for the first time at their father's court, unaware of their relationship to the king, at the behest of Valmiki, their "Guru" and Protector, the *Ramayana* is being sung in every corner of India. In course of time it crossed the frontier and spread to "Greater India." Java, Bali, Sumatra and Siam are still ringing with the melodious songs of the *Ramayana*.

The whole of India took Valmiki's *Ramayana* to its bosom and the regional languages with their local colour soon made it their own, singing and performing it in the market-places or temple-yards of their towns and villages. Ramachandra, the highly noble king of Ayodhya, and Sita Devi, his most devoted consort, Vir Hanuman, his faithful follower, and Lakshman, his selfless brother, have all been raised to the level of deities. It is the *Ramayana* which has deified

Ramachandra and his family by attributing divine qualities to them.

For thousands of years India has worshipped the haloed memory of "Narachandrama (the moon among men)," as Valmiki called that ideal king. The *Ramayana* being composed in chaste Sanskrit, it could not be easily understood by the common people. So between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C., it is said, the Sanskrit *Ramayana* was first translated into Pali and then into Prakrit, the latter being the spoken language of India at that period.

Thus, the *Ramayana* came into the hands of the masses and in course of time strange stories were added to the main text of the epic, and some interpolations also found their way into it. In Buddha's Jataka stories, more than one incident of the *Ramayana* has been retold in some form or other. In this way the *Ramayana* was by and by translated into all the principal languages of India. Stories and incidents from the *Ramayana* even began to spread to the homes of humble villagers.

The theme of the *Ramayana* was so simple and homely, and the plot of the story so attractive, that its wide popularity is not in any way a strange phenomenon. The sudden death of King Dasaratha, the affectionate father who could not survive the pangs of separation from his beloved sons; the tremendous sacrifice of Ramachandra on the eve of his "*Rajyavishck*" to enable his father to fulfil his promise; devoted Sita's noble example in following her husband unhesitatingly to the jungle; the step-brothers', Lakshmana and Bharata's fraternal attachment to each other and, especially, Lakshmana, devotion to Rama, are exemplary. The loyal and valiant follower, Vir Hanuman, who was always ready to serve his noble lord in all his difficulties and dangers; the wonderful band of apes, monkeys and baboons; and lastly, all the uncannily strong and powerful monsters of Lanka are fascinating to read about and stimulate the imagination to a wonderful degree.

We find even the mighty poets of the past, such as Mahakavi Kalidas, Vababhuti and others, borrowing material and

ideas from the *Ramayana*. These largely contributed to the success of their best works, the *Meghadutam*, *Raghuvamsam* and *Uttar Ramcharitam*.

The *Ramayana* was first translated into Bengali during the 15th century A.D. by the great Bengali poet Shri Krittibash Ojha who hailed from Phulia, a village near Santipur in the district of Nadia. This highly imaginative poet introduced some new incidents and added local colour to embellish his work. The fall of Taranisen, who went to fight Ramchandra with the names of "Rama" inscribed all over his body; the envoy of Aungad at the Court of Ravana, who made the majestic Rakshasa King look very small by his sharp, curt, satirical and witty remarks; the funny episodes of Ahiravana and Mohiravana, these and some small but excellent additions and alterations made by him, proved the extraordinary merit of this Bengali composer. He is in no way less respected than Valmiki himself throughout the length and breadth of Bengal. It is claimed by connoisseurs that Krittibash's work is almost a creation rather than a translation, like the *Rama-charita manasa* of the saintly poet Tulsidas in the 16th century. Krittibasha Kavi's work was so popularized in his own country, that every home in Bengal possesses a copy of his *Ramayana*. He has been an essential part of the culture and life of Bengal for the last 500 years. In every district a special class of singers flourished, resembling the *troubadour* of ancient times, who took up the profession of entertaining people with songs and recitations from the *Ramayana* during all festive occasions and at the annual *melas* (fairs) that used to be held everywhere in Bengal.

The popularity of Krittibasha's *Ramayana* was so widespread in Bengal that some of the less talented poets who came after him attempted to imitate him as far as they could. Of these, Kavichandra and Adbhutacharyya may be mentioned here as they achieved some success in their efforts. We have to record with regret, however, that the most unsuccessful of these imitations surreptitiously found their way into Krittibash's text, thereby defiling his work to a great extent.

The literary works of Bengal of the mediæval age may be classified into three principal groups: the *Padavali*, i.e., short lyrical songs, the *Panchali*, i.e., stories in verses with detailed incidents for singing and recitation, and the *Sandarvas*, i.e., thoughtful articles in prose for intellectual enjoyment.

The *padavalis* are sub-divided into four distinct types: The Vaishnava *padavalis*, religious lyrics other than the Vaishnava *padavalis*, popular love lyrics and folk songs and rural verses.

In the *Panchali* group we have three distinct types: translations from Sanskrit epics like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Sri Bhagawata*, the *Mangolakavyam*, which are tales in verse of the cruel persecutions of unbelievers by wrathful gods and goddesses as well as the story of the favours bestowed on the faithful, folklore rhyme in doggeral and ballads dealing with social themes.

Though the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Sri Bhagawata* belong to the first division of the *Panchali* group, we have to remember that the influence of these three great epics, especially the *Ramayana*, was so great that all contemporary and later productions in Bengali literature are saturated with the spirit of these works.

The direct and indirect influence of the *Ramayana* is to be found scattered in almost every literary work of the mediæval age. In the popular Vaishnava *padavalis*, the poet's description of Sri Krishna's departure to Mathura from Brindavan while the Gopinis, their hearts wrung with pain, tearfully entreat him to stay, appears to be nothing but the echo of the scene of desolation witnessed in Ayodhya when Sri Ramachandra, setting out on his exile with Lakshmana and Sita, bids farewell to his people. In the lovely Bengali rendering of Vedabyasa's *Mahabharata* by the eminent poet Kashiram Das, the descriptions of "*Vana Parba*" remind us of the "*Aranyakandam*" of the *Ramayana*.

The famous poetess of the mediæval period Chandrabati Devi, daughter of the reputed *Ramayana* singer Kavi Dwija Vansidass of North Bengal, composed ballads based on Sita's

heart-rending sorrow—when misjudged and unjustly accused by the people, she was turned out from the kingdom of Ayodhya.

Also in the *Mangola Kavyam* we find that the tough fight between Dakshina Roy and the Pir Gazi Khan described in the “*Rai Mangal*” *kavyam* is exactly the same as the terrible fight between Rama and Ravana depicted in the “*Lanka Kandyam*” of the *Ramayana*.

In the “*Chandimangal*” *kavyam* of the great poet Mukunda Ram, it is evident that the chapter on the fire-ordeal of Phullora, the heroine, is a replica of Sita’s fire-ordeal as described in the *Ramayana*. We also find that the picture of Kalketu, the hero, as portrayed by the poet is only a duplicate of the image of Ayodhya’s young prince Ramachandra—a mere reproduction of Valmiki’s grand creation.

In the “*Aswamedha*” *panchali* by Dwija Raghunath Das, though largely drawn from Kavi Kashiram Das’ *Mahabharata*, one never fails to recognize Ramachandra’s “*Aswamedha*,” as vividly described in the *Ramayana*. The picture of the successive defeats of Bharata and Lakshmana in their fight with Sita’s two brave sons, Lava and Kusha, as depicted in the *Ramayana*, has been redrawn in Dwija Raghunath Das’ “*Aswamedha*” *panchali*, where he describes Arjuna combating with an unknown opponent (no other than his bold and courageous son Bavrubahana) and his humiliating discomfiture at the end of the fight.

Now let us examine the folk-songs, popular ballads, folklore and fairy tales of Bengal. Nowhere do we find any reference as to the exact dates of their origin, nor is it possible to trace their source, though we know that these were later developments. The anecdotes of Prince Sweta Vasanta or the tales of Kanchanmala and other stories, which relate how a gallant Prince ventured into the land of the *rakshasas* to deliver a beautiful princess cruelly imprisoned by them, are obviously indebted to the *Ramayana*.

Thus we find in the mediæval period of Bengali literature unmistakable evidence of the influence, both direct and in-

direct, of the *Ramayana* as well as almost in all the literary works of successive ages. The consciousness of some writers was so permeated by the great epic that the authors came almost unconsciously to draw from it. The idealism with which the characters of the *Ramayana* were invested has been transferred from the realms of poetry and imagination to the sphere of practical life.

In the folk literature of Bengal, especially in the rural dramas and operas (better known as *Yatra*) publicly performed by the villagers, the influence of the great epics, and particularly of the *Ramayana*, cannot be denied. A large number of these playwrights borrowed their materials from the "*Kalpa-Taru*"—the *Ramayana*. Before the "*Krishna Leela*" performances came into vogue, plays featuring various Rama-Sita episodes, were the mainstay of village entertainers.

Many of you are perhaps acquainted with the "*Rama-Leela*" performances, which are still very popular in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and which deal mostly with incidents from the *Ramayana*. In the puppet dance performances, known in Bengal as "*Putul Nantch*" or "Drolls of the Dolls," we find most of the characters drawn from this perennial source—the *Ramayana*. Many incidental songs and ballads of the villages of Bengal are still replete with the teachings of the *Ramayana*.

The merit of modern literature too is very often enhanced by the parabolic insertions from the *Ramayana*. The great structure of modern Bengali literature, the foundation of which was laid by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and others, came into being during the middle of the 19th century. The edifice continues to be built to greater heights and one can see all along the inspiration it owes to the *Ramayana*.

One of the greatest modern poets of Bengal, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, in his immortal Bengali epic, *The Fall of Meghada*, furnishes yet another example in point. Most of the best modern dramas of the Bengali stage owe their exquisite quality to the influence of the *Ramayana*. The forc-

most dramatist of our province, Girish Chandra Ghosh, who is known as the Shakespeare of Bengal and acknowledged as the "Father of the Bengali stage" because he was also an actor of a very high order, as well as his contemporaries and followers, have culled copiously from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* as well as from Rajasthani ballads in the magnificent dramas they have produced for our stage. The silver screen also portrays incidents from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Rajasthans's "*Sita Haran*," "*Sitar Vanabash*," "*Lakshnan Varjan*," "*Rama Chandrer Rayyavished*," "*Sitaar Agni Pariksha*," "*Hara Dhanu Vanga*," "*Bali-badh*," "*Lanka Dahan*," etc., are some of the dramas whose very titles are suggestive enough.

It can be safely asserted that modern Bengali literature owes much to the *Ramayana*. Some of the works of our illustrious Kavi Guru Rabindranath Tagore and those of the great Bengali novelist, Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji, bear an unmistakable impress of that benign influence. Gurudev's *Valmiki Prativa* provides an illuminating illustration of this.

Tagore used to call the *Ramayana*, "our family epic." The immortal history of Bharatvarsha has been embodied in it. India's lofty attainments in the domain of moral and spiritual understanding are due mostly to the influence of this immortal epic. Our country finds its highest ideal of manhood enshrined in the *Ramayana*. Gurudev went so far as to declare that Bharatvarsha and the *Ramayana* are one and the same. In his opinion the influence the *Ramayana* has exerted on our life and literature has been invaluable. It is part of the heritage which our very fortunate ancestors have handed down to us. The message of the *Ramayana* still resounds within our inner soul.

Gurudev used to acclaim it as "A perennial spring of eternal forces" ever increasing our mental and spiritual wealth. It not only chastens but enriches us from within. We cannot visualize a future when its influence will cease to enlighten and ennoble us. The *Ramayana's* immortal "*Kalyan Bani*" will always retain its freshness and continue to exercise its sub-

lime influence on every field of human activity while time endures.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON GUJARATI LITERATURE

SHRI P. C. DIVANJI

More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since I contributed an article on the subject of "The Ramayana in Gujarati Literature" to the *Ramayana Anka* of the *Kalyana*, a journal of Gorakhpur. A good deal of literature on this subject has appeared in print since then. The request of the Honorary Secretary of The P.E.N. All-India Centre to contribute a paper to this symposium gives me an opportunity to take stock of such literature. It also enables me to reevaluate that literature in the light of the experience acquired since then.

Time was when scholars of the Gujarati language believed Narasimha Mehta, whose literary activity can be traced to the latter half of the 15th century, to be the earliest composer of songs in the Gujarati language on devotional and philosophical subjects. Later scholars have brought to light works composed in that language by poets earlier than he. Prominent amongst whom are Asaet or Asait, son of Rajaram, who is believed to have composed songs on "*Rama Lila*" in *Samvat* 1427 (A.D. 1371); Bhalan, who lived from 1426 to over 1500 A.D.; Bhima, whose songs can be traced to *Samvat* 1484 (A.D. 1428) and *Mantri Karman*, the date of whose composition is believed to be 1470 A.D. Gujarati literary compositions, it has been found, date to about a century earlier than Narasimha Mehta's time.

The language in which the works of these authors have been composed appears to be a modified form of an earlier one, which an Italian scholar terms "Western Rajasthani" and which the Gujarati scholars call "Old Gujarati." *Kahan-dade Prabandha* of Padmanabha and *Munjaraja Prabandha* of the Jaina writer Merutungacarya are considered to be representative of the small literary output in that language.

It was most probably the language of the masses in north Gujarat, western Rajasthana and Malwa during and, for some time, after the reigns of the Chalukya or Solanki kings of those regions and of south Gujarat. Modern Gujarati and Marwadi are its offshoots. As for itself, it is found to be the result of a fusion of the Sauraseni Prakrit and the Apabhramsa. Many works of a religious and secular character written in this language by Jaina *sadhus* in the first half of the 8th century have been discovered and published.

The writers of Gujarat, from the middle of the 14th century to the middle of the 20th, are usually divided into two classes: those who flourished up to the middle of the 19th century—or more accurately up to 1852—who had been uninfluenced by English literature, being styled as “Pracina” (ancient), and those who were engaged in such activities after that date and were influenced more or less by foreign literature being styled as “Arvacina” (modern).

Among both these groups there are numerous writers whose compositions are connected with our present inquiry, as numerous incidents from Valmiki's *Ramayana* continue to furnish themes to writers and to provide inspiration and spiritual upliftment to themselves and their readers. Ever since Valmiki raised Ramachandra to the position of an incarnation of Vishnu, the god in the Hindu trinity who “protects the good and destroys the wicked” and who bestows freedom from transmigration not only on those who love him but also on those who do not, in Gujarat as in the other regional divisions of Bharatavarsha the constant repetition with faith of the very name of Rama is faithfully believed to be conducive to salvation. It is, therefore, repeated loudly and in quick succession by those who carry a dead body to a cremation ground. Rama has also been identified with the Param Brahman of the Upanisads, who, according to the Vedanta doctrine, shines resplendent in the hearts of living beings as the Lord who is the “Sakshi” (witness) of the three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming and sleeping—which they experience daily, and who has assumed the form

of the objects of the phenomenal world on the earth, in the middle region and in the heavenly vault over their heads.

During the extraordinary long course of the history of Indian culture there have been conflicts on several occasions between two types of civilizations—one an indigenous one of the “Daivi” (divine or spiritual) type and the other of the “Asuri” (demoniac or material) type. The latter sometimes seemed to be on the point of defeating the former but on each occasion, thanks to the perpetuation in this blessed land to this day of the cult of the “Nivrittimarga” (Path of Retirement), the divine elements in our civilization woke up from their slumber and marched towards perfection. The foundation for our triumphant civilization has been laid on the *Ramayana* as well as on the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas. Although Western education has had its effect on the lives and thought of those Indians who depended on the patronage of a foreign bureaucracy as well as on certain writers—those who were expected to appreciate their art—the many millions in this country have remained 100 per cent Indian at heart. Many artists too have continued to draw their inspiration from ancient sources. We find accordingly in Gujarati literature entire or partial translations of the *Ramayana*, the lives of Rama and Sita or other incidents narrated in poetic language and character sketches of the hero, heroine or some personages who had rendered faithful service to any of them. We find the first post-Vedic poet's art expounded for the knowledge of those who, though interested in the epic, had no access to the original Sanskrit work.

It appears from an alphabetical list of the ancient poets and their works entitled *Pracina Kavio ane Temani Kirtio* (published by the University of Baroda in 1949, as the 310th publication in the Sayaji Literary Series) that the number of poets of the old school who have been ascertained to have been alive between *Samvat* 1427 (1370-71) and *Samvat* 1908 (1852) was 372, the earliest of whom was Asaet or Asait and the latest were Dayaram and Girdhar. A study of the names of the works noted against their names has revealed that there were 50 to 52 of them who had to their credit either a

Gujarati rendering of the whole or a selected part of the *Ramayana* or one or more works based on the epic. The uncertainty as to the number is due to a note, by the editor Shri Ramanik Sripatray Desai, to the effect that there were three poets of the same name and that the copyists of the available manuscripts of their works had not clearly stated in the case of each, which was its author. As regards the number of authors having some connection or other with the *Ramayana*, it appears from a study of the *Classified List of 8,000 Gujarati Works* published by the Pustakalaya Office, Baroda, that the number of such authors was 55. There were thus between 105 and 110 Gujarati authors living between A.D. 1370 and 1933 whose literary compositions have some connection or other, directly and indirectly, with Valmiki's epic poem. The number of works, big and small, to their credit is 139. Out of these there are 42 which are either translations of the entire epic poem or independent compositions narrating the whole story as contained in the epic. There are seven such compositions comprising the substance of the story as contained in one or more of the *kandas*, amongst which the "*Balakanda*" seems to be the most favoured; five are translations or adaptations of Tulsidas's Hindi version entitled *Rama Caritra Manasa*; one of the latter class of the *Adhyatma Ramayana*; four of the *Yogavasistha Ramayana* and one of the *Jaina Ramayana* entitled *Paumacariya* by Vimalasuri, a 10th century Jaina *sadhu*. Out of the remaining 79 there are 54 works, big and small, treating some select incidents in the lives of either Rama or Sita, the most favoured of them being the birth and childhood of Rama, his heroism and marriage with Sita, their life in the forest, Sita's abduction, Rama's attack on Lanka and its conquest, his coronation and the abandonment and consequent lamentations of Sita. The main characters in the *Ramayana* which a number of poets have selected for eulogy and the display of their talents are those of Hanumana, Angada, Mandodari, Vibhishana, Lava and Kusa. One modern writer has selected as his theme the battle between Laxmana and Indrajit and another has expatiated on the virtues of Indrajit's wife Urmila.

The literary forms which these writers employed besides narrative and didactic poetry, were short measured songs called *Padas*, *Dhalas*, *Dholas*, *Dhulas*, *Dhauilas* or *Dhavalas*, of which *Garbis* are a variation, and *Candravalas*, all of which are songs with mixed cadences; pure or mixed *chandas* of the classical Sanskrit type arranged as dialogues; short or long dramas; and subsidiary episodes within the principal ones called *Akhyanas*, etc. Prose written in the ornate manner after the style of the Sanskrit poet Bana and *Caritras* written in imitation of Dandin's *Dasakumara Caritra*, also figure among these.

We are now in a position to take a comprehensive view of the literature existing in Gujarati which has been composed under the influence of Valmiki's *Ramayana* between the second half of the 14th century and the first half of the 20th, setting forth the notable output of each century.

Authors

14th CENTURY:

Asact or Asait *Ramalila na Pado*

15th CENTURY:

Bhalan	<i>Sitasvayamvara</i> or <i>Ramavivaha</i> <i>Ramayana</i> —the first <i>Kanda</i> or <i>Ramabalacaritra</i>
	<i>Sita-Hanumana Samvada</i>
Vishnudas	<i>Ramayana</i> —7th <i>Kanda</i>
Svayambhudeva	<i>Ramayana Purana</i>
Mantri Karman	<i>Sitaharana</i>
Bhima	<i>Ramalila na Pado</i>

16th CENTURY:

Vishnudas II, pupil of Bhudhar	
Vyas	<i>Ramayana</i>
Mandan	<i>Ramayana</i> <i>Hanumanlopakhya</i> <i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i>
Nakar	<i>Ramayana</i>
Kahan Haribhai	<i>Ramayana</i> —six <i>Kandas</i> <i>Ramabalacaritra</i>

Tulsi	<i>Ramalila</i>
Madhava	<i>Sita no Sokelo</i>
Lavanyasamaya	<i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i>
Sidhara Swami	<i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i>

17th CENTURY:

Premanand	<i>Ranayajna</i> <i>Ramayana</i> <i>Lava-Kusakhyana</i> <i>Risyasringakhyana</i>
Ratnesvara	<i>Lanka Kanda</i>
Vallabha, son of Premnanda	<i>Sitaraha</i> <i>Sitavilapa</i> <i>Sitavilasa</i>
Vaikuntha	<i>Ramavivaha</i>
Tulsi	<i>Ramachandraji na Dhola</i>
Haridasa	<i>Sitavirahani Caturio</i>
Bhavana Bhakta	<i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i>
Samala Bhatta	<i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i> <i>Angadavisti</i>
Viraji	<i>Angadavisti</i>
Govindaram	<i>Ravana anc Vibhishana</i>
Meghaji Kasi	<i>Hanumanacaritra</i>

18th CENTURY:

Diwalibai	Ramayana in Parts:— <i>Ramabalalila</i> <i>Ramavivaha</i> <i>Ramajanma</i> <i>Ramarajyabhiseka</i> , as so far known
Raghunathdas	<i>Ramayana</i>
Ranchodji, a Bania of Toranda	<i>Ramayana</i> <i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i>
Bhano	<i>Ramacaritra</i>
Rajaram Ranchhod	<i>Ramakatha</i>
Puribai	<i>Sitamangala</i>
Dhiro Bhakta	<i>Ranayajna</i>
Kalidasa	<i>Sitasvayamvara</i>
Gowindaram	<i>Ramaji-na Pado</i>
Vallabha Bhatta	<i>Ramaji-na-Pado</i> <i>Ramavivaha</i>

Vajio	<i>Ranayajna</i> <i>Sita-no-Sandeso</i> <i>Sitamandapa</i>
Thobhan	<i>Ramaji-na Vivaha</i> <i>Hanumana-ni-Garabi</i>

THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY:

Pritamdas	<i>Adhyatma Ramayana</i> (Translation)
Chhotam	<i>Janakivivaha</i>
Hariram	<i>Sitasvayamvara</i>
Bapu Saheb Gaekwad	<i>Ramarajjo</i>
Mukunda	<i>Ramalila</i>
Mitho	<i>Ramaprabandha</i>
Krishnabai	<i>Sitaji-ni Kanchali</i>
Manahara Swami	<i>Ramagita</i> (Translation)
Kavi Girdhar	<i>Ramayana</i> <i>Hanumana Nataka</i>
Dayaram	<i>Hanumana-Garuda Samvada</i>

BETWEEN THE 17th AND 19th CENTURIES—BUT OF THE OLD SCHOOL:

Jadavo, a Koli	<i>Ramacaritra-na Pado</i>
Agradas	<i>Ramabhakti-na Pado</i>
Ananda	<i>Ramalila-na Pado</i>
Bhuvandas, son of Venidas	<i>Ramalila--Ramachandrajji-na Pado</i>
Ranchhodmal	<i>Ranayajna</i>
Narapati	<i>Ravana-Maulodari Samvada</i>

FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY:

Dalpatram Kavi	<i>Ramayana-na Dhola</i>
Chhotalal N. Bhat	<i>Ramayana</i>
Narmadashankar Kavi	<i>Ramayana-no Sara</i> <i>Rama-Janaki Darsana</i> <i>Sitaharana Nataka</i>
Ichharam S. Desai	<i>Ramayana</i> (Translation) <i>Yogavasistha</i> (Translation)
Hargowind Kahanji	<i>Ramayana-no Rasatmak Sara</i>
Sri Haradas	<i>Ramayana-na Candravala</i>
Jani Lalji Viresvar	<i>Ramayana-no Kathasara</i>
Maganlal Maneclal	<i>Ramayana-nu Rahasya</i>

Jivanlal Amarsey	<i>Ramayana-ni Vato</i>
Gulabchand Meghaji	<i>Ramayana Kavya</i>
Manibhai Khandubhai	<i>Ramayana Kavya</i>
Narayan Hema-Chandra	<i>Ramayana-Sara</i>
	<i>Ramacaritra</i>
	<i>Sitavanavasa</i>
Tewari Devadatta	<i>Sitavanavasa</i>
Mulji Ranchhod	<i>Ramayana-tattva-rahasya</i>
Gordhanbhai Dahyabhai	<i>Ramacaritramrita</i>
Nilakanth Isvarabhai	<i>Valmiki-no-Jaya</i>
Rajaram Ranchhod	<i>Ramakatha</i>
Rupji Jayakrishna	<i>Ramayana—Bala, Ayodhya and Aranyaka Kandas only</i>
Prabhasankar Pathak	<i>Bala Ramayana</i>
Pandya Manjudevi	<i>Bala Ramayana</i>
Keshavji Hariram	<i>Yogavasistha</i> (Translation)
Vasanji Chatrabhuji	<i>Jaina Ramayana</i> (Translation)
Narasimha Sarma	<i>Ramagita-bhasyanuvada</i>
Kasalchand Nimji	<i>Ramarasa</i>
Motilal Mansukhram	<i>Ramarasa</i>
Manisankar Gowindji	<i>Rama anc Ravana</i>
Janmasankar-Buch "Lalita"	<i>Sitavanavasa</i>
Lallubhai Naranji	<i>Ramaviyoga</i>
Motilal Bhaichand	<i>Ramaviraha</i>
Prabhuram Pritamji	<i>Ramavina or Svatmanubhavalahario</i>
Ganapatram Visvanath	<i>Ramasvamedha</i>
Chunilal Punjaram	<i>Ramagunagila</i>
	<i>Salya-ni Ahalya</i>
Pranajivan Odhavaji	<i>Ramachandra</i> (Novel)
Odhavji Pragaji	<i>Ramaratana</i>
Hiralal Mulachand	<i>Ramarasavani</i>
Jaykishore Haribhai	<i>Sali Sita</i>
Pila Bhikhaji	<i>Rama anc Sita</i>
Jayasimha Dayaram	<i>Ramasuyasamanasaratattvatarangini</i>
Keshavji Vasanji	<i>Angadavisti</i>
Bhiksu Akhandanand	<i>Yogavasistha</i> (Translation)
Maganbhai Chaturbhai	<i>Vaidehivijaya Nataka</i>
Botadkar	<i>Urmila</i> (Character sketch)
Kishorilal Mashruwala	<i>Rama anc Krishna</i> (Comparative study)

Prabhasankar Joshi	<i>Ravana-Mandodari Samvada</i>
Dolatram Kruparam	<i>Indrajitvadha Kavya</i>
Chandramukh Pandya	<i>Ramacaritra</i> (Translation)
Manjulal Ranchhodlal	<i>Ramayana-nu Rahasya</i>
Manaharram Mehta	<i>Balakanda</i> (Translation published in 1953)
Ranjitlal Harilal	<i>Rama-ni Katha</i>
Hansa Mehta	<i>Balakanda</i>
Ravisankar Jyestaram	The <i>Ramayana</i> of Tulsi (Translation)
Kalyanji Ranchhodji	The <i>Ramayana</i> of Tulsi (Translation)
Shastri Kalidasa Gowindji	The <i>Ramayana</i> of Tulsi (Translation)
Shastri Chhotalal Chandrasankar	The <i>Ramayana</i> of Tulsi (Translation)
Shastri Narahari Maganki	The <i>Ramayana</i> of Tulsi (Translation)

The above list takes note of the works in Gujarati on the life of Rama as delineated in Valmiki's *Ramayana* in Sanskrit, and on the subsidiary topics connected with it at any of its stages, so far as 1933. The number of authors in the last group shows clearly that even after the youth of Gujarat had begun to be educated on the lines laid down by Macaulay in 1856, they did not lose interest in the national hero or in the poetic art of the *Adikavi* who immortalized him. It is therefore reasonable to believe, as I do, that in the 20 years that have elapsed since the *Supplement to the Classified List of the Gujarati Works*, on which some of the facts in this paper have been based, more works based on the life-story of Rama may have been composed. I regret it has not been possible for me to try to ascertain and take note of them here. But that apart, I regretfully noticed while studying the list of the old Gujarati poets and their works, published by the University of Baroda in 1949, that several of the works mentioned therein had the remark *aprasiddha* (unpublished) made against them. This indicated either that, in spite of their existence being completely reliable, manuscripts were not available to the editors of the *Pracina Kavyamala* and *Brihat Kavyadohana*; or that, though they were available they were considered to have been lacking in such literary merit as entitled them to be preserved among the literary treasures of Gujarat. In fact, the number of unpublished works on this

one subject is so large that a fresh search for manuscripts and a reconsideration of the question of publication is considered by the learned societies at Ahmedabad and Bombay as called for.

All such works constitute evidence of the considerable amount of influence which Rama and Sita have exercised on the life of the people of Gujarat. Further evidence of that fact is afforded by the allusions to those lives contained in Gujarati writings which are not directly related to them. A few illustrations from the literature commencing from the 14th century onwards would not therefore be out of place here. Thus Merutungacarya, who flourished about 1305 A.D. (Refer to K. M. Jhaveri's *Milestones of Gujarati Literature*, 2nd edition, 1938, p. 24), describes in a couplet in *Munjaraja-prabandha* that there were 7,800 kinds of talents in the forehead of Ravana but not one of them was useful to him when Lanka was destroyed. Padmanabha, an author of the same century (Refer to K. M. Munshi's *Gujarat and Its Literature*, 1935, p. 106), writes in *Kahanadade-prabandha* that the ladies of the household of the chief of Samiara, a nephew of the hero, entered cheerfully a funeral pyre saying "Rama, Rama," when they came to know that the army of Allaudin had contrived to pollute the water of the tank inside their fort by throwing beef into it. Premanand of the 17th century says in *Narasimha Mchta-nu Mamru* that the saints and devotees of Vishnu who had accompanied his family to the house of his son's bride-to-be got down from their vehicles uttering passionately the names of Rama and Krishna. Samala Bhat, a contemporary of Premanand and a rival of his son Vallabh, says in *Vikrama Caritra* that the recital of that *Caritra* was as popular as that of the *Ramayana*. Dvarako, an 18th century devotee, has composed and left behind several songs extolling devotion to Hari in which he speaks of Rama and Krishna with equal reverence. Shri K. M. Munshi, while speaking about the contribution of Kaka Kalelkar who is a Maharashtrian by birth yet the author of Gujarati works such as *Himalayano Pravas*, writes in *Gujarat and Its Literature* that though a product of modern education based on Western

lines, Kaka Kalelkar had so imbibed the elements of ancient Brahmanic culture in his young and impressionable years that even in the persons of the ash-besmeared *sadhus* and *vairagis*, whom he used to meet during his travels in the Himalayan regions, he not only saw nothing despicable but rather found much to admire. He sensed an overpowering desire to become one with the glorious beauty of nature "in order to be in tune with the Infinite, forgetting the bondage of this contemptible body." Whenever he journeyed up the mountain paths, the spiritual presence of Rama and Krishna became a reality. Lastly, as stated in the *Amukha* to my imaginary drama *Vaisali-ni Vanita* (which though written in 1923 was not published until 1938), I had drawn upon the *Ramayana*, among other works, to fill the gaps in the design, which was suggested by Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. My book concerned itself with the social, economical, political, religious, historical and geographical conditions prevailing in the Bharatavarsa of the Mauryan age, and that never-failing source of inspiration, Valmiki's great epic, helped me in a laborious task.

It will have been gathered from the bird's-eye view of the literature which has come into being in Gujarati under the influence of the *Ramayana*, that this epic (which according to the late Professor Jacobi, who translated it into the German language in 1893, was crystallized into its present form somewhere between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.) had continued to be studied and drawn upon by men of light and learning as the source refreshing the fundamental basis of Indian culture. It was regarded as such in spite of the changes to which it had been subjected during the 12 to 16 centuries that have elapsed since its last adaptation in epic Sanskrit at Valmiki's hands. As the author of the *Yogavasistha* points out in its *Mumuksu-prakarana*:—

...it continued to be a fruitful source of inspiration even in the last century when the ideals of life in Gujarat, as in the other linguistic regions of India, underwent a great metamorphosis under the influence of the spread of education on Western lines.

In this connection reference must be made to an anecdote, recorded by Shri K. M. Jhaveri while commenting on the merits of Premanand's *Risyasringakhyana*, that when some people began to find fault with the poet-reciter for continuing his vocation even during a famine year (*Samvat* 1729, i.e., 1672-73 A.D.) he composed an episode which dwelt on the effects of famine conditions—conditions which were similar to those that prevailed—on the life of the people in the age of Ramachandra, in the territory of King Rompada of Angadesa, as described in the 10th Sarga of Valmiki's *Balakanda*. The popularity of the *Ramayana*, which has continued uninterruptedly for over 2,000 years, is likely to get a great fillip in Gujarat in the next few years owing to the University of Baroda having sponsored the preparation of a critical edition of the work through the Baroda Oriental Institute. The papers in this symposium may be expected to render valuable help to its Board of Editors as constituting a general Introduction to the work.

The time at my disposal does not permit me to read out illustrative passages from Gujarati poetry. I will, however, conclude this paper by reciting a few lines from the very popular *Ramayana* by Girdhar Kavi, calculated to serve the additional purpose of drawing the attention of the scholars assembled here to the various versions of the story of Rama prevalent in the first half of the 19th century. Translated into English they convey the following ideas:—

Great is the glory of Hari's tale, numerous saints do know;
Muni Valmiki, the First of Poets, is the author of the *Ramayana*. (4)

First then the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, then Vyasa composed another;
Then comes the *Ramayana* of Vasistha, and true there's that of
Sukadeva too. (5)

Brahma moreover composed a *Ramayana* and taught it to sage
Narada;

The Son of Anjani too composed a tale by name *Hanumana*
Nataka. (6)

Vibhishana too composed a *Ramayana*, while the work of Sambhu
is pleasant;

He had taught it to Parvati and its name is *Siva Ramayana*. (7)

The composition of Agastya is known as the *Agastya Ramayana*; *Sesa Ramayana* is the name of the tale composed by Ananta. (8)

All munis have conjointly composed the *Adhyatma Ramayana*; That narrated in the *Kurma Purana* is the *Kurma Ramayana*. (9)

There's moreover one holy *Agama Ramayana* and another *Ramayana* of Bharata;

That composed by Svami Kartika is the good *Skanda Ramayana*. (10)

Paulastya having composed one, narrated it in the *Kalika Khanda*; The dialogue between Ravi and Aruna is known as the *Aruna Ramayana*. (11)

That known to exist in the *Padma Purana* is named the *Padma Ramayana*;

An achievement full of surprises is that composed by sage Bhagadallava. (12)

While that composed by Dharmaraja is verily the *Dharma Ramayana*. Thus composed by many poets, great has been the extent of the *Ramayana*. (13)

Unfathomable are the virtues of Raghuvira, none can reach their end; Each according to his genius poets have narrated Rama's tale. (14)

Particles of earth, stars in heaven and drops in a cloud can be counted;

But the virtues of Raghava can neither be measured nor counted, unattainable being their end. (15)

It's an ocean filled with nectar; say, how can it be drunk up; With a billful of water its thirst quenched, a bird doth happiness feel. (16)

O Inner Ruler! bestow thy grace, may the work be carried to its end;

Poor of intellect, I, do thus beseech, to be able to narrate the tale of Rama. (17)

Bowing at the feet of all the bards, for regard with folded hands I pray;

Take compassion, knowing this to be a child, and make a gift of the virtues of Hari. (18)

For the same reason I have been unable to enter into a discussion as to the merits and demerits of the individual works above-mentioned, several of which have not even been published. That is not, however, a drawback in my view because a critical estimate of the works of individual authors indebted to the *Ramayana* for their subject-matter can have

no place in a symposium in which those who have taken and will take part have dealt or will deal with the influence exercised by the *Ramayana* on the literature of the languages recognized by the Indian Constitution.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON MAITHILI LITERATURE

Mahamahopadhyaya DR. UMESHA MISHRA

Literature is a mirror of society. Mithila has been a land of ancient glory, great traditions and scholarship. "It is a province which has enjoyed," said R. C. Majumdar in his Presidential Address to the 14th Session of the All-India Oriental Conference, "a special reputation as one of the noted centres of Oriental learning in India. It is needless for me to remind you that we stand today on the sacred site of Mithila, sanctified by the dust of the feet of Janaka and Vajnavalkya. The tradition of learning and spiritual attainment established by these famous sages of old was ably carried on in later times by Prabhakara, Vacaspati, Gangesha, Paksadhara and many others. Even after the Muslims had conquered the rest of northern India, Mithila maintained its independence for a long time and remained the home of Hindu culture and learning. Codes of Hindu law, its usage and politics by Chandeshwar and Vacaspati Mishra, Vidyapati's *Padavali* and the works on *Navayanyaya* stand as beacon lights of Hinduism in this age of darkness. This noble tradition has not died down."

Mithila, too, has been the only province which may be said to have maintained the philosophical spirit of the country, *i.e.*, unity in diversity and identity in difference. No exclusive attention has, therefore, been given to any particular faith or creed at the cost of any other equally important religion or spiritual thought. Thus Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktism, all three, have occupied an almost equal status in the province. But for all practical purposes the Maithilas, being mainly philosophical in their attitude, realize that the ultimate end of life, religion and philosophy is to be achieved by the grace

of Siva, and which again, is possible only through the instrumentality of Sakti.

Besides this, the other aspects of Sakti-worship in everyday life brought to an end the predominance of Vishnubhakti, Mithila being the birthplace of Saktirupa Sita, the Sakti influence prevailed in the province. This also had its repercussions on our literature to a considerable extent. On the other hand Krishna has been the favourite Vaishnava god of the Maithilis, due perhaps to the fact that Radha and Krishna have been recognized as an ideal couple both on the spiritual and material planes. They have been accepted as models for all lovers, and since love is the most important and universal experience that life has to offer, the popularity of Radha and Krishna can be easily understood. It is interesting to know in this connection that in his *Kirttipataka*, Vidyapati asserts that Krishna was merely another incarnation of Rama, who came to earth to satisfy the longing of the Lord for an experience of worldly love which had been outside his sphere during the *Rama-avatara* (incarnation).

Though Valmiki's *Ramayana* was appreciated in many ways, its hero did not capture the imagination of the people of Mithila. That our people do not play the *Ramalila* as is done in other provinces provides evidence that the Sakti or Sita cult appealed more strongly to the Maithil mind than the Rama cult. It would not, however, be correct to say that the *Ramayana* exerted no influence over the Mithila people. If literature holds the mirror up to society, then we have proof that during the last century there have flourished saints in Mithila who were great devotees of Rama. The Ram-navmi festival, too, is observed with great enthusiasm all over the province, particularly at Janakapur, Sitamarhi, Ahalyasthan, Baruar and other places: while the story of Rama has been written in Maithili by saints like Sahebarama, Sivadutta and others. Long before Vidyapati, whose version of the *Krishna-avatara* we have referred to above, and at later stages, the Valmiki *Ramayana* enjoyed great popularity in our midst. There was a notion prevalent among literary circles that poetic genius can be acquired by means of the *Ramayana* and

especially the "*Sundarkanda*." It is said about "the Maithila Kalidasa" that it was due to his being well-versed in Valmiki lore that he was able to write his celebrated work. It is an undisputed fact that even today Valmiki's *Ramayana* is read by one and all in the first half of the month of Chaitra.

In mediæval Maithili literature we do not find any work based on or about the *Ramayana*. The dramatic literature of Nepal included a play entitled *Ramayana*, which was written under the patronage of Jayasthitimalla (1318-1394). Another play on the same theme was written in three acts by one Krishnadasa in Jagatprakasa's name and by an unknown dramatist in the reign of Ranajitmalla (1722-1772). Three centuries later a drama entitled *Ramavijaya* was written by Shankardeva of Assam (1449-1568) at the request of Prince Shukladhwaja of Cilaraya. Strangely enough this play does not deal with any of the victories of Rama—an ever popular theme—but only with the winning of Sita in the *Sita-swayam-wara*. There exists, however, a play called *Sitaharana* by Sivadatta which is based on the Sanskrit *Ramayana*. Sita is shown as the beloved of Rama, and the theory of love at first sight is depicted in an unconventional manner.

What is known as the modern period in Maithili literature begins with the great *Ramayana* of Chanda Jha. It was written because the modern Maithili considered it to be a bad reflection on the general state of affairs that no translation of the *Ramayana* existed in his language. Maharaja Laksh-mishwar Singh therefore commissioned the poet to write it and the beautiful Maithili rendering of Chanda Jha came into being. A special feature of this *Ramayana* is the retention of the original *ragas* and *raginis* and their successful combination with those to be found in Maithili. This work because of its flowery cadences became very popular both with the learned as well as with the general public. The nature of the theme and the Sanskrit style of the work led the Maithila Sanskritists to realize the charm, brevity and force of their mother tongue. It is written mostly in Sanskrit metres, but its melodies follow the laws of the Maithil school of music, as laid down by Lochana and others. Like Valmiki's *Ramayana*,

which is known to be *Tantrilayaamanritam*, our own version is also very melodious. This work inspired another court poet Laladasa to compose a fresh *Ramayana* entitled *Rameshwara-caritra Ramayana*. A new edition of this work is being published by the poet's descendants.

The only modern Maithili play dealing with episodes from the *Ramayana* is *Sitaswayamvar* by Ananda Jha. The ideals of the great epic, however, have been embodied in a work entitled *Ramayana-Shiksha* which contains an impassioned appeal for their acceptance. The same motif underlies *Stridharma-Shiksha*, which also contains innumerable relevant quotations from the *Ramayana* and other sources.

Meanwhile, each year on the ninth day of the earlier half of the month of Vaisakh, *Janakinavami* is celebrated with increasing enthusiasm by all the literary societies and organizations of Mithila.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON MALAYALAM LITERATURE

AMBADY KARTHIAYANI AMMA

Two things stand out as factors which pre-eminently influenced the history of our ancient land—the snow-capped Himalayas and our two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. They have not only influenced the literature, lives and culture of our nation but have been responsible for far-reaching changes in all phases of our activity. The *Ramayana* presents a great theme, a wonderful drama of human life which stresses the universal and timeless aspects of the soul of man. God comes down to earth as Man, takes on himself the burdens and limitations of Humanity and after heroic struggles and sacrifices attains Divinity again. Thousands of years later we have a similar example in Mahatma Gandhi, born and brought up as an ordinary man and attaining through the process of relentless self-purification the status of a saviour of humanity and a world teacher. His life should form the subject of a third epic.

Valmiki, the poet, has shown considerable skill in the delineation of subtle and tender emotions and when one reads the *Ramayana* in the original or even in translations, one is reminded of Keats's description of the awe and wonder which he experienced on reading Chapman's translation of Homer. Keats describes this feeling as one of exhilaration and wonder, a feeling which recurs to us when reading this great epic. Its author was himself a supreme example of a worldly householder who became a saint and an artist and infused supreme qualities into his work. The *Ramayana* has a universal appeal. The characters live on earth and hold communion with thinking minds. One finds that the story has gripped the Western mind, resulting in numerous translations of the epic into European languages.

The *Ramayana* has influenced Malayalam literature from the earliest times. Round the story several primitive folk-songs have been composed. Not only dramas, commentaries and essays but innumerable lyrics and sonnets have been written on some aspects of the story. The *Ramayana* has always been a source of inspiration to all generations and has continued to hold the interest of young and old alike. It runs as an unbroken thread through every form of literary creation and at every period of literary development.

When Malayalam came under the influence of Tamil, Kambar's famous Tamil translation enjoyed popularity in Kerala. Kambar himself visited this place, which helped to stimulate interest in his work and resulted in a commentary on his writings, which has come to be known as the *Kambar Ramayana*. This was followed by *Ramacharitham* by Cheerama Kavi, one of the Kings of Travancore. In this and later works, as *Veera-Gutha*, the language employed was a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam common in southern Travancore. The metres of some of these works was extremely musical and formed the source from which developed later Dravidian metres. There was, however, a rendering which bore a great metrical resemblance to Valmiki's version and which yet provided ample evidence of the writer's originality.

Around 1400 A.D. appeared the *Kannassa Ramayana* by Rama Panikkar, one of the greatest poets of middle Travancore. This is a rendering which breathes the fire of the original and contains really beautiful descriptions of natural scenery and of the subtleties of the human consciousness. The Moghul period witnessed a revival of interest in Hindu culture and religion. The Bhakti cult found its devotees round about this time. *Chambu Kavyas* enjoyed great popularity, the *Chambu Ramayana* by Punam Nambudiri being outstanding. Written in *Mani-Pravala* style, a harmonious combination of Malayalam and Sanskrit, they reflected the linguistic development shown in the Tamil-Malayalam combination. Many of the *Chambu Kavyas* were not meant for reading alone. They were recited with humorous interpolations which were introduced by the exponents of *Koothu*.

The link between mediæval and modern Malayalam is contained in Thunjan Ezuthassan's famous masterpiece, his translation of the *Adhyatma Ramayana*, which was generally accepted as a *Dharma Shastra*. His style had a distinct individuality, inasmuch as it was equally affected by Tamil and Sanskrit influences. At this period the influence of the *Ramayana* was at its zenith. There were daily recitals in temples and homes. In the law courts prisoners were compelled to take their oath on the *Ramayana*, as Christians do on the Bible. Every householder boasted of a copy of Ezuthassan's masterpiece. It became the custom to recite portions of the work at the time of birth and death and at the marriage feast. Thunjan Day was celebrated and pilgrimages frequently undertaken to Thunjan Parambu.

One of the most picturesque developments in our artistic life was embodied in *Ramanattam* by Kottarakkara Thampuran, a form of play-acting which culminated in Kathakali, the perfected dance-drama of Kerala. The story was outlined in verse, the dialogue sung and a great deal of importance attached to *abhinaya* (expression). It might be mentioned in this connection that the great poet Vallathol has rendered yeoman service in the preservation, development and popular-

ization of *Kathakali* under the banner of the Kerala Kalamandalam.

Kunjan Nambiar's *Thullals*, story-recitals with dance movements together with *bhavas* and suitable musical accompaniment, were very popular. The writer used the language of the common man. He used a great many Malayalam expressions, idioms and proverbs which helped to make his style simple but effective. Thunjan transports the average man on to the spiritual plane of the Puranas, but Nambiar makes the Puranas live in our midst.

The modern period in Malayalam literature begins with the great Ramachandra Vilasam's story of the *Ramayana*, which was followed by the translation of Sanskrit dramas—*Uthara Rama Charitham* by Mannadiyar, *Pratima Natakam* by K. Kesavan Nair and M. Raja Raja Varma, *Anargha Raghavam-Janaki Parinayam* and others. A distinct awakening is noticeable at this period in our literature. There was a spirit of youthful enterprise abroad. Writers sought to explore new techniques, new forms, and to cover fresh ground. Vigour and variety were to be found in the writing as a result of the impact of the English tongue. The famous poet Vallathol translated the beautiful Valmiki *Ramayana* adopting the metre of the original, proving that Malayalam was capable of expressing the nuances and shades of the meanings found in Sanskrit. Translations from English have the same possibilities in our language.

Vallathol's next achievement was *Kochu-Seetha*, the story of a dancing-girl who aspired to Sita's divine chastity and to embody the ideals associated with Indian womanhood at its best. More generally, however, Malayalam is being used as a vehicle for voicing democratic ideals, the independence of the individual and the equality of women. Sita appears in a new light as in Kumaran Asan's *Chinta Vishtayaya Seetha*, which is a short poem describing her as a Sita abandoned, doubting the justice of Rama's actions, a Sita with an individuality of her own but still the ideal wife. This work has given rise to a great deal of controversy because of the vital

differences in presentation of motive and character between Valmiki and Asan. Some present day writers assert that Rama displayed a certain amount of weakness in surrendering his kingdom; they also question the wisdom of adopting the ideals of the *Ramayana* in an age which has produced the hydrogen bomb. Others who disagree feel that the great epic has exercised and will continue to exercise an enormous influence on the moral and cultural pattern of our lives. Mahatma Gandhi's conception of *Rama Rajya* in which Rama is visualized as the servant of his people has influenced the trend of events. One hopes that the modern tendency to discard all that is ancient will not include what has proved to be the finest and greatest force in our life and literature.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON MARATHI LITERATURE

PROF. K. P. KULKARNI

I have tried here in this paper, to assess the influence of the *Ramayana* on Marathi literature from the efforts made by Marathi writers both in prose and poetry. The influence of this sublime poem by Valmiki, one of the most outstanding of Sanskrit poets, is very great on Marathi literature. In fact both the epics have held and continue to hold a great sway over Marathi writers. The story, the incidents, the characters, in short the whole epical panorama inspired Maharashtra as they did other parts of India. These two epics are the national heritage of India, thoroughly national both in outlook and experience, in incident and character, in conception and execution. The incidents delineated and the characters portrayed are actually so many realistic facets of the age-long patterns of human life in India. The life portrayed here seems to have been actually lived in 3,000 B.C., according to some scholars.

The description and narration of the various incidents of Aryan life floated over society in the form of folk stories and folk-songs. These fortunately found eminent composers and redactors who worked on them with their genius and put them

together as a connected epic. This happened or continued to happen much later, according to some from 400 B.C. to 400 A.D. It is not yet certain whether the *Ramayana* preceded or followed the other epic, the *Mahabharata*.

It is also held that the *Mahabharata* portrays an uncouth Aryan society while the *Ramayana* portrays a more civilized one. The culture depicted in the former is more primitive than the one depicted in the latter. The polyandric unions, the pounding of bones, the drinking of blood, the braiding of woman's hair with gory hands, the pestle and plough as weapons, all such incidents are certainly primitive as compared with the morality of one-word, one-wife and one-arrow. The Krishna epic came in vogue in the west and the Rama epic came in vogue in the east and south. This is so even in these days as is shown by the fascination of the people for either of the two epics. But we shall leave all these points for historians and Indologists to settle. We shall take up current trends, the influence of which we notice in Marathi literature from its beginning.

There are two aspects of the *Ramayana* which have come to bear on and of which we find traces in Marathi literature, both ancient and modern. The two aspects are the narrative and the philosophical, the first dealing with the actual episodes and the other with the philosophical bearing or outcome of those episodes. The first has been depicted in the *Ramayana* while the other in such books as the *Adhyatma Ramayana* and the *Yogavasistha*. The narrative portion is the main source of attraction and the philosophical portion is a later metaphysical accretion to the original story, meant for or created by some mystically inclined writers. The narrative portion again is very useful to common people as the main objective therein is to depict a human life—pure and sublime, the family life in its sublime aspect—the father, mother, brothers, the husband and wife, their mutual ties of love religion and relationship. In this narrative portion the real aim of the poet again is not to describe the fights of Rama and Ravana. That is only a means, the real end in view is obedience to parents, the sacrifice for the sake of a brother, the

mutual faith of husband and wife, the unswerving loyalty of servant to the master, the elevation of morality and the denunciation of its opposite, as Tagore said. The inculcation of these social virtues was deemed highly essential for the uplift of society in Maharashtra by the ancient and medieval Marathi poets. The whole *Ramayana* had, on account of its high moral tone and its strong denunciation of Satanic tendencies, direct bearing on social conditions in Maharashtra in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries of the Christian era. This is one of the reasons why the *Ramayana* in its narrative aspect rather than the philosophical one became a favourite theme with some Marathi writers. It afforded fascinating material on which great minds continued to feed for over four centuries. Not only the main fountain-head but even the smaller incidents were not less attractive. Poets of lesser calibre, who could not cope with the fuller treatment of the whole *Ramayana*, satisfied themselves with a modest theme or episode. One sings only the *Putreshti* sacrifice while another, describing Kausalya's desire for pregnancy, eulogizes with avidity the exploits of Rama. A third one vividly puts forth the *Tatakavadha*, the breaking of Shiva's bow. A fourth one—in many cases a woman—waxes lyrical over the marriage ceremony of Rama and Sita and describes the routine of the ceremony current then. There are some others who desired only the most beautiful three of the seven *kandas* of the *Ramayana*—the *Bal*, the *Sundara* and the *Yuddha*. The abandonment of Sita by Rama, the conflict in Rama's mind about his duty as a king and his duty as a husband, the bringing up of the sons, Kusha and Lava, the battle of the princes and Rama's meeting his wife and sons, are all very charming themes that appealed to the imagination of some of our Marathi poets.

The whole of the *Ramayana* has been rendered by Ekanatha in its philosophical form, by Mukteshwara and Venabai in its concise form and by Madhav and Moropant in its complete form. There are some poets who have adapted only a portion of it—a *kanda* or two. Kanho Trimal (1368-1418) composed only one, "*Patala Kanda*." One Mudgal Bhat

composed only the *Ramaryas*. Ramadas (17th century) composed only the *Bala* and *Yuddha Kandas*. Krishnadasa Mudgal wrote only 78 episodes in 10,000 *ovis* from two *kandas*. Niranjana Madhava (18th century) sang only "*Bala Kanda*" in its philosophical aspect in addition to *Rama Karnamrita* and Rama's life in which he has not used a single labial sound. Venabai composed only the first five *kandas*. Shridhara (18th century) wrote on some selected episodes in the life of Rama and prepared his *Ramavijaya*. The theme of *Sita-Swayamwar* has been dealt with by some nine poets—Vitha Renukanandan, Janijanardan, Anandatanaya, Nagesh, Vithal, Vamana and Venabai and others. The heroic exploits of Lava and Kusha have been narrated by Moropant and Vamana. The desires of Kausalya and the secret of Rama's life have been sung by Ranganatha Nigadikar (17th century).

Rama's life has not only attracted the old Marathi poets, it is dealt with even in modern times. One Amritarao Oke, who lived towards the end of the Peshwa Empire, composed his *Shatamukha Ravana Vadha* around this theme. Even the pioneer Marathi playwright Annasaheb Kirloskar wrote a drama on the life of Rama—*Ramarajyaviyoga*. Prior to Kirloskar some dramatic performances dealing with Rama's life were shown on the Marathi stage in the form of *Ramalilas* and *Dashavataras*. The *Uttara Rama Caritra* by the famous Sanskrit poet Bhavabhuti was a source of inspiration to one Marathi poet of modern times, Sumanta, who modelled his play on the Sanskrit work. The episode of Shurpanakha has been beautifully depicted in verse by Girisha, a modern poet. A highly entertaining biography of Rama has been written in prose by C. V. Vaidya, an illustrious writer and scholar of the last generation. An attempt at reconstituting the text of the *Ramayana* critically on the lines of the *Mahabharata* is being made by Chandorkar.

This is in short the history of the various attempts regarding the *Ramayana* made by Marathi writers right from the beginning of Marathi literature up to the present times. The earliest poets in Marathi such as Mukundaraya, Dnyaneshwara and other Mahanubhava poets have not made any specific

effort to feature Rama in their literary compositions. But in the *abhangas* of Dnyaneshwara and others there are stray references to Rama and other characters and their noble deeds.

What we have said so far chiefly concerns the narrative aspect of the *Ramayana*. The other, namely, the philosophical aspect, has also received attention from Marathi writers. The *Yogavasistha* which can be said to present the philosophical aspect has been treated by four poets: Ranganatha Mogarekar, Vamana Pandit, Haridasa and Hariray Shende. Ekanatha's *Bhavartha Ramayana* is an attempt to explain the philosophical aspect of the *Ramayana*. In fact this can be said of all the poets who have written on the *Ramayana*. Though to all outward appearances their works are so many narrations, still they have philosophical under-currents running. These attempts can be said to be philosophic-narrative works based upon the original epic of Valmiki.

Ekanatha (1533-1599) says in his *Bhavartha Ramayana* that he was actually persuaded by Rama himself to compose the poem as soon as possible. The whole narrative panorama of the *Ramayana* is presented in the garb of philosophy. Dasharatha is a possessor of a body with ten senses. Aja is the unborn element, Rama is the Parabrahma. Kausalya is pure learning or *Sadvidya*, Sumitra is intellect, Kaikeyi is ignorance or *Avidya* and lastly Manthara is evil knowledge or *Kuvidya*. The poem at various places and on various occasions shows the influence of contemporary events on the poet, e.g., the Muslim invasions described under the demons, the *Rakshasas*. Ekanatha wrote his work just towards the end of his life. He could finish four *kandas* and left the remaining portion to be finished by his disciple, Gavaba. The best pieces on which Ekanatha has bestowed all his genius are the *Sitajanma* and *Sitavivaha* or the birth and betrothal of Sita, the Atri hermitage, the pangs of separation and the heroic deeds of Maruti. Ekanatha's effort is a major one.

The fascination that the *Ramayana* had for him was inherited by two of his grandsons, Mukteshwara and Madhav. Mukteshwar (1609-1660 A.D.) started his poetic career with the

composition of the *Ramayana*, which he entitled *Sankshepa Ramayana* and which contains 1,725 verses in different metres—virtually a conglomeration of metres. In this, he has attempted to translate the best lyrical verses from such well-known Sanskrit works as the *Prasanna Raghava*, *Bhamini Vilasa* and *Kumarasamohava*. This was the work of a novice and does not compare favourably with his highly imaginative poetic work on the *Mahabharata*. It contains many of the blemishes associated with beginners—the violations of the rules of metre and grammar.

The second grandson, Madhav Swami of Tanjore (circa 1703 A.D.), has to his credit a good deal of Rama poetry, both narrative and philosophical. He composed two *Ramayanas*, one in the *Ovi* metre and another in the *Sloka* metre. He was a voluminous writer, having composed more than 18,000 verses on the *Ramayana*, more than 88,000 verses on the *Mahabharata* and some 12,000 verses on the *Yogavasistha*. This voluminous work has very little real poetic merit, even though the author acclaims it as an exquisite product of genius. He was a follower of the Ramadasī cult. An Ekanathaite by relationship and a Ramadasī by discipleship, he combines in himself the traits of both—the ardent devotion (*bhakti*) of one and the equally ardent activism of the other.

Another major, though incomplete attempt in this direction is that of Ramadasa (1608-1681 A.D.), another illustrious writer in Marathi. He is said to be the preceptor of another master-mind in Maharashtra—the great Shivaji who established an independent Maratha kingdom. Ramadasa has written a good deal of virile literature in Marathi—literature of action. Of all the Marathi poets, Ramadasa was himself a man of action and the literature he produced is also full of action and also champions action. He was a thoroughly practical man aiming at teaching the people how to live a successful worldly life. He always emphasized the values of this world in preference to other-worldliness. His philosophy is a philosophy of action and optimism—a militant philosophy. It is no wonder therefore that of all the *kandas* of the *Ramayana*, he picked the most virile ones wherein he could get opportunities of

extolling the heroic deeds of several characters and place them as good examples to be followed by the people who greatly needed them. The characters of Rama, Laxman, Sita, Sugriva, Hanuman and Vibhishana have been especially portrayed in heroic settings. Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Mandodari and Indrajit have also received their due share. The two *kandas*, the *Sundar* and the *Yuddha*, comprise in all some 1,400 verses—the *Sundar* having 100 and the *Yuddha* 1,300. In writing these, of course, Ramadasa followed in the main the *Ramayana* of Valmiki but at times departed from the original to suit his convenience and capacity. He lays great emphasis on that portion of the *Ramayana* which deals with the release of the gods from the bondage of Ravana. There was a reason for his being specially enamoured of this episode. The circumstances described in the *Ramayana* and those which actually obtained in Ramadasa's own day were much akin. He wanted to infuse a martial spirit among the people and therefore wanted to get as much of that spirit out of the *Ramayana* as possible. The reason why he sang the *Sundar* and the *Yuddha kandas* lies in his desire to rouse the people to courageous deeds and to make them fight against alien rule. He also wanted to show the vast difference in the two administrative systems, our own and the alien one, the godly and saintly system of Rama and the other satanic system of Ravana, thus awakening the people to the actualities of the day.

In a letter to the devotees of Rama, living in the famous Rama temple at Panchavati, Ramadasa gives expression to his devout feelings of service to Rama. He says that his mind would never swerve from the vow which he had once taken. This, he says, is the only prayer which they should convey to the deity. This was the initial stage in his worship and service of Rama and it heightened as the years went by. Rama was his *guru*, his deity, his all. Ramadasa stands unique amongst all the saints of Maharashtra in not acknowledging any human agency as his *guru* as others did. Only Rama's life appealed to him and that very strongly. He saw the social *malaise* and he was convinced that the example of Rama alone could lift the people out of the political and religious torpor in which

they had sunk. It was but natural that whatever he wrote, whether it was an admonition to his disciples or to himself or the precepts for practical life given in his famous work, *Dasa-bodha*, should awaken the people to the reality of the situation, should inveigh them against tyranny and oppression and exhort them to follow the path of right action. The sanctity of Rama's life, he thought, would remove the impurities of the life of the people, its virility would remove their weak-minded submission to alien rule, its divinity would inspire divinity in the kingdom to be established. It was thus to establish a Divine Kingdom, a *Rama Rajya*, that Ramadasa sang and made others sing the story of Rama. He therefore stressed the virile portions of the *Ramayana*—the *Sundar* and the *Yuddha Kandas*—which afforded ample scope for achieving the objectives he had in mind. His whole composition is fully purposeful and is a product of conscious art. He is brilliant, very forceful and dynamic when he describes the heroic, the pathos, the beautiful and the peaceful or the final *Brahma* or *Shanta* sentiments. Puritan reformer—both religious and political—as he was, how exquisitely he could portray the *Shringara* or the love sentiments.

In addition to these *kandas*, Ramadasa has also written a number of miscellaneous and stray verses about Rama. The verses known as the *Karunashtakas* are the most popular. They differ very widely from his other compositions which are mostly either didactic or narrative. These verses owing to their ardent feeling and equally ardent expression constitute some of our best lyrics in Marathi, comparable only to the *abhangas* of Namadev, Janabai and Tukarama. They are the best psalms in our language possessing the spontaneity, sincerity, pathos, devotion and every other quality associated with high class devotional poems.

It is but natural that the example of Ramadasa should have been followed by his disciples. Venabai (1627-1678 A.D.), one of his direct disciples, has written in Marathi, a *Ramayana* consisting of the first five *kandas* and also one *Sitaswayamwar*. Venabai was a daughter of a Deshpande from Kolhapur, and received her first initiation from her *guru* in 1650 A.D. The

Rama-worship had been in practice in her parents' family for a long time past. As a child, she could repeat by heart all the verses from the *Adhyatma Ramayana*. After her initiation she started her *Ramayana* of which she composed the first five *kandas*, each consisting of some 13 *samasas* or chapters of 100 verses each. The method and the style is just the same as is found in the other writings of the Ramadasi sect. In the actual composition she has deputed many a line from Valmiki's original and based it on the philosophical version, *viz.*, the *Adhyatma Ramayana*. The best of her poetry appears in the *Sundar Kanda* and the reason is obvious. There the deity Maruti plays the main role and Maruti is the main deity of worship by all the Ramadasi disciples. Venabai lavishes all her poetic genius in describing the wondrous deeds of Maruti.

She is at her best, however, in a poem entitled *Sitaswayamwara*, the story of Sita's marriage. Marriage is usually a topic which is very dear to a woman's heart. The poem covers 14 chapters, the first two of which describe the prowess of Rama displayed while guarding the sacrifices of the sages and the last two describe Rama's heroism displayed in his fight against Parashurama. In between these two portrayals of heroic sentiment, there is the portrayal of the love-sentiment, permeating the *swayamwar* episode. The whole narration, on account of this skilful device, has become very charming. In the marriage *pandal* Rama appears after breaking the Shiva bow and is seen by Sita. Her throbbing heart is described by Venabai in equally moving terms. She says: "Sita saw—Rama—the god of love and became motionless as all her faculties were centred on Rama." The conversation between Laxman, Rama and Vishwamitra at the time of the breaking of the bow is also charmingly effective. The story offers ample scope for describing all the attendant religious ceremonies which, though very formal, seem to have great attraction for women-folk. Herein we also find an indirect portrayal of contemporary society—the manners and customs, the beliefs and ceremonies, the ornaments and clothes, the vessels and utensils, the food and dishes, the weapons and other accessories in vogue at that period. The scenes we have referred to are the best from

both points of view, conception and execution: the grief of Dasharatha and Kausalya at the parting with Rama and of Janaka and Sumedha at the parting with Sita, both lead to the final consummation—the attainment of *bhakti* by Rama. The whole theme of Rama and Sita's marriage is in actuality the theme of the union of *Jeeva* with *Parabrahma*.

In addition to these two major attempts Venabai has two minor ones to her credit, one is a dialogue between Rama and Guhaka and the other is the *Kaul* or assurance in which we find the extreme delight felt by one and all at the winning of independence by Shivaji. Ramadasa also has given expression to the same feeling in his *Anandvanabhuwanin*. But I may venture to say that not only in this poem but in some other places in some poems Venabai surpasses her *guru*, as in the description of the mental disturbance of the parents at the parting of the children, the mental condition of Sita at the sight of Rama, the bashfulness felt by women in uttering their husband's name, the sight of and the address to the *Mudrika* or ring by Sita—these are scenes which only a woman's genius could conceive and a woman's pen could describe. It is no wonder therefore that Ramadasa failed where Venabai succeeded.

The next poet who dealt with themes from the *Ramayana* was Shridhar Swami (1678-1729) who flourished in the first quarter of the 18th century. This poet is very popular among the masses as his poems are very simple, straight and also forceful. He wrote on the lives of both Krishna and Rama—the epic heroes—the former being *Harivijaya* and the latter *Ramavijaya* (the triumphs of Hari and Rama). There are again two more works, one devoted to the valorous deeds of the Pandavas and the other to those of god Shiva, to his credit. The poem on the *Ramayana* was composed in 1702 A.D. It contains 40 chapters and 19,248 *ovis*. The *Ramavijaya* poem, as the writer himself says, is a great box that contains 40 coconuts each full of fresh jewels and gold. The basis on which the whole structure is raised, is of course the *Ramayana* of Valmiki and other Purana. No other poet in Marathi can compete with Shridhar in presenting the Rama episodes in

so vivid and yet so simple a manner. He is a master of the figures of speech. In addition to the poetic touches that are spread all over the poem, there are philosophical touches also. Ravana is the ego, Lanka is the human body. Kumbhakarna is anger incarnate, Indrajit is desire, Prime-Minister Prahasta is arrogance and the demons are all evil propensities. The metaphysical side is also described well. Rama is the heart, Laxman is the intellect and so on. He has also done some intellectual feats by coining new words, thus baffling his readers and keeping them guessing. Kumbhakarna he terms "*Ghatashrotra*," Mrigajala is "*Rohiniceer*," Dasharatha is "*Dwipanchsyandana*," Sita is "*Mangala Shagini*," Indrajit is "*Pakashasan Shatru*," Rama is "*Mangala-janani-kumari-vara*." As he took the Purana as the basis of his poem, he had much new material to offer which other writers on the *Ramayana* could not. We know Mandodari, for instance, to be the wife of Ravana but very few of us know Sarama as the wife of Vibhishana, or Sumedha as the wife of Janaka.

We get a fund of information from the *Ramavijaya* pertaining to the social conditions of the times in which Shri-dhara lived—the various articles of food, the ornaments, the clothes, the utensils, the weapons, the religious beliefs. The vivid descriptions enable us to visualize the whole of contemporary society as clearly as possible.

Another poet whose composition based on the *Ramayana* can be said to be a major one is Moropant (1729-1794 A.D.), a poet belonging to the latter half of the 18th century. Amongst all those who have written the *Ramayana* in Marathi, either wholly or in part, Moropant stands out as the foremost both in volume and in craftsmanship. Moropant, it is believed, composed 108 different *Ramayanus* of which some 90 are available. All these are the poet's metrical attempts and were composed in his old age, just about 1786-87.

The first attempt is known as the *Mantra Ramayana* in which one of the 13 syllables contained in the *mantra* "*Sri Rama jaya Rama jayajaya Rama*" is used at the beginning of each *arya*. *Mantragarbha Ramayana*, *Ramyamantra*, *Mantri*, *Sapta mantra*, *Bala mantra*, constitute efforts in a similar direc-

tion, each having a different metre. Moropant has three *Ramayanas* in which all the 13 syllables of the *mantra* mentioned above are employed somewhere in the body of the metre. The three *Ramayanas* are *Trisapta Mantra*, *Satswa, Mantra Maya*. In four others the holy names of Uma, Ganga, Kashi and Prayaga occur somewhere in the metre. The words *Rishi*, *Raj* and *Sannamagarbha* occur in three other *Ramayanas*. Only short syllables are used in one and very long in the other and soft syllables in a third, giving rise to these different *Ramayanas*—the *Hriswa*, the *Dcergha*, and the *Soumya*. In yet another version, called the *Matra Ramayana*, all the 52 Marathi syllables are used. Moropant's ingenuity is particularly to the fore in the *Parantu Ramayana* where in every metre the word *parantu* (meaning "but") is used.

Another variant known as the *Niroshtha Ramayana* is completely devoid of all the labial sounds, while an element of humour is evident in the *Hum Ramayana* and *Sum Ramayana* because the metre begins with the *hum* and *sum* sounds, both of which signify "ay." In the *Shiva Ramayana* and the *Vishnu Ramayana*, 108 names of the deity Shankara and 1,000 names of the deity Vishnu are to be found. Hanuman, Vasistha and Sita narrate the whole story of Rama in three other versions, each version having accordingly a different name, *Hanuman*, *Guru* and *Sita*. The pith of the Rama story is contained in *Sara Ramayana*. The story is abridged in one verse, *Ekashloki*, and told in a disjointed manner in the *Trutita*.

Moropant's achievement is a wonderful and admirable one. It shows craftsmanship of a very high order but it cannot be gainsaid that much of the emotional fervour which we find in some other poems like *Bharata*, *Kckavali* and *Sanshayaratna Mala*, has been sacrificed to these acrobatic feats, however intellectual they may be.

So far I have attempted to put together all the efforts made by poets in Marathi and have tried to assess the influence of the *Ramayana* on their compositions. The *Rama Kavya* in Marathi is certainly very great. It has given satisfaction and solace both to the souls of the poets who sung them and also to the souls of the people who listened to them.

Rama Rajya is the greatest ideal, to achieve which Rama made sacrifices unequalled in the history of the human race.

Ramanama was first sung by Shiva. Valmiki followed him. Krittiwasa sang it in Bengali, Goswami Tulsi in Braja, southern poets in Tamil and Malayalam. Ekanatha, Ramadasa, Venabai, Shridhar and Moropant sang it in Marathi. Those times are old. Those poets are old. But *Ramanama* is fresh. It is within living memory that Mahatma Gandhi awakened the masses to the power of *Ramanama*. It has the power to lead people to establish *Rama Rajya*, the Divine Kingdom on earth. The characteristics of a true *Rama Rajya* which was established by Shivaji in the 17th century are rightly sung by Maharashtrian poets, Tukarama and Ramadasa. Should we not cherish them in our hearts in these days of our newly-won independence? Should we not try to revive the same *Rama Rajya* of old of which Tukaram says:—

Rama is the king, and Rama is the people. In *Rama Rajya*, the king is no other than the people, they are one. No other but pious speech is uttered. Masters are humble and taught to serve. There is none to show jealousy against. Tuka says the whole world is full of these godly things; and that is what we should declare to all mankind.

The idea entertained by Ramadasa about *Rama Rajya* coincides with that of Tukarama. The *Rama Rajya* of his dream, which he saw established in his life time by the efforts of Shivaji, is described thus:—

There is neither excess of rain nor the absence of rain. The earth never abandons yielding crop. The people have no fine nor punishment. There is no [unnatural] death or disease. No one is enslaved, no jealousy is seen. There is no fraud, nor falsehood of word, nor vain argument or discussion. There is happiness, ardour and joy everywhere. People are pious and religious. There is justice everywhere, no injustice. The earth is never barren and desolate. Rama, the Almighty, is the King of such a land. May the King fare well.

It is our earnest hope that we achieve this *Rama Rajya* in our country, in our time, and pass it on as an abiding heritage to a million generations to come.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON ORIYA LITERATURE

SHRI LAKSHMI NARAYANA MOHANTY

Religion was the cornerstone of all activities in ancient India. All ancient literary works were therefore generally based on religion. Though the Vedas and Upanishads are the two most ancient scriptures of the Hindus, yet it fell to the lot of the two great poets Valmiki and Vyasadeva to immortalize the soul of ancient India through their epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Many have been the thought-currents sweeping away old ideas and thoughts in this ancient land. But such has been the wonderful, almost magical, sway of these two epics that their influence still remains unrivalled and unimpaired throughout these 3,000 years. Undoubtedly, the *Ramayana* is the more ancient of the two epics. Even today, countless millions in this great peninsula—young and old, men and women—read, hear and witness its scenes with great eagerness and fervour. Its pathetic and yet sublimely beautiful descriptions are matchless and inimitable.

Composed in the pre-Buddhist age, the *Ramayana* depicts the Indian society of that period. The deep affection and reverence of brother for brother, the wife's sacred conjugal love for her husband and the ideal relation between father and son have been so vividly and flawlessly painted that one finds in them a lyrical manifestation of the life and soul of India. It holds out before our eyes—Dasaratha the ideal father, Ramachandra the ideal son, Sita the ideal wife, Bharat and Lakshman the ideal brothers and Hanuman the ideal follower. Every Indian yearns to live by these ideals and the *Ramayana* therefore stands out as the eternal symbol of his hopes and aspirations.

It has not only stood as an unending fountain of popular joy but has also profoundly inspired our bards, poets and lyricists. Not only has Sanskrit literature been enriched by such great books as Kalidasa's *Raghuvansa* and Bhababhuti's *Uttara Rama Caritra*, but the storehouse of Oriya

literature has also been adorned with such rare gems as—the *Bilanka Ramayana* by Sarala Das, *Rama Bibha* by Arjun Das, *Jagamohan Ramayana* by Balaram Das, *Baidehisa Bilas* by Upendra Bhanja, *Bichitra Ramayana* by Biswanath Khuntia, *Tapaswini* by Gangadhar Meher and *Sita Prema Tarangini* by Shri Nilakantha Rath.

It is not easy to trace the exact date when the Oriya language originated, the language of two crore Oriyas. It could be asserted, however, that the Oriya language had been taking shape, slowly but surely, prior to the 11th century. *Mandala Panji*, Jagannath's lexicon, is admitted to be the first real literary Oriya composition. Then in the 15th century, the writings of our first poet Sarala Das held great sway. The 16th century saw the literary creations of the *Pancha Sakhas* (Five Associates) reach new landmarks. Kavi Samrat Upendra Bhanja attained hitherto unknown literary heights in the 18th century, and thus ran the gurgling fountain of Oriya literature down to modern times, modern Oriya literature beginning from the latter part of the 19th century.

During the reign of the Ganga dynasty in Utkal (from the 11th to the 15th century A.D.), Sanskrit had the pride of place and literary men preferred Sanskrit writings to compositions in the local dialect. But with the march of time and after the attainment of new popular heights by the *Kalasa Chautisa* of Bachha Das and the great *Mahabharata* of Sarala Das, Sanskrit had to gradually relinquish its place.

ADI JUGA

(*The First Age, lasting from the 11th to the 16th Century*)

Prior to composing the great epic *Mahabharata* in the local dialect, Sarala Das (1415), the first Oriya poet, composed in 14-letter metres a mythological legend named the *Bilanka Ramayana*, describing Sita as the incarnation of eternal power. The story relates how on their return to Ayodhya after the death of Ravana, there arose a dispute between Rama and Sita as to their share in the death of that great demon. After a lot of deliberation, it was decided that

the one who was able to slay the thousand-headed demon king of Bilanka would be acclaimed as the real killer of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. When Ramachandra could not perform this impossible task at Bilanka, Sita had to go there in the company of Lakshman and slay the thousand-headed demon. The literary theme of this epic is not based on Valmiki's *Ramayana* or on any other Sanskrit Purana. The real purpose of Sarala Das's composing such an original legend appears to have been the manifestation of the strength of the eternal woman. It can be safely conjectured that the existing influence of the *Sakti* cult led him to sing the glory of woman, the originator of power. Though simple in language and devoid of the lotus-eating ideas associated with the *Mahabharata*, this book has its own peculiar charm rarely found elsewhere.

Then comes *Rama Bibha* (The Marriage of Ramachandra), a popular lyric by Arjun Das (1510). It contains in 12 *chhandas* (chapters), in different *ragas* and *raginis*, the life history of Rama, beginning with Viswamitra's invitation to the two royal princes, and it depicts the death of Tadaka, the emancipation of Ahalya, the legendary tales associated with the birth of Bali, Sugriv and Hanuman, the *Swayamvara* (marriage) of Sita and the vanquishment of Parasurama. The author has made Ramachandra a copy of Lord Jagannath of Purushottam (Puri). The description of Rama's morning rites appears very similar to that of Lord Jagannath's religious rites, and the description of King Dasaratha's entourage and march to Mithila on the occasion of Ramachandra's marriage faithfully mirrors the ancient expeditions of the kings of Utkal. At places Arjun Das has chosen for his lyrics characteristic material from the *Mahabharata* of Sarala Das.

PANCHA SAKHA JUGA

*(The Age of the Five Associates, lasting from the
16th to the 18th Century)*

Mahatma Balaram Das (1473) was one of the five great associates of Lord Chaitanya. Endowed with little education in his childhood, he wrote the *Ramayana* in the *dandi brutta*

(a metre) from whatever he had heard and memorized of the discourses of learned men on the *Ramayana* before embracing the Vaishnav cult. This book is popularly known as the *Dandi* or *Jagamohan Ramayana* and is the first complete *Ramayana* written in Oriya. But it is not a translation of the original Sanskrit *Ramayana*. Except for taking its main theme as a skeleton, it bears little resemblance to the original *Ramayana*. The chapters remain the same and the story element is unchanged. But Balaram Das has enriched his book with tales and descriptions from his fertile and creative imagination and observations. His book therefore gives a faithful pen-picture of the glory, social life, beautiful scenery and the national characteristics of the Orissa of his times. He wrote this book not merely as a lyrical poem, but essentially as a great *purana* or sacred scripture, non-existent before in the local Oriya dialect. He has accepted Ramachandra as the seventh incarnation of God Almighty and has portrayed each and every character with great beauty and skill. *Atibadi* (great) Jagannath Das attained immortal fame with his *Bhagavat* and Balaram Das with *Jagamohan Ramayana*. There is no Oriya hamlet worth its name that possesses not its *Jagamohan Ramayana*. There is no doubt that the religious life and literature of the Oriya nation have been greatly enriched by this great book.

Thereafter Sankar Das wrote his simple yet lucid *Baramasi Koili*, which is steeped in pathos. His fertile yet practical imagery describes the woes of the great mother, Kaushalya, for the trials and tribulations faced during each month of the year by her only son Ramachandra during his banishment and solitude.

It fell to the lot of Haladhar Das to translate the original Sanskrit *Adhyatma Ramayana* into Oriya in 1681 A.D.

BHANJA JUGA

(*The Bhanja Era, lasting from the 18th to the 19th Century*)

When Orissa came under Mohammedan occupation in 1568, her alien rulers showed very little interest in the develop-

ment of her literature. Patronage passed into the hands of local ruling chiefs and *zamindars*, who kept poets and our literature alive. The ingress of aliens had, however, its natural repurcussion in changing our old religious thought. Thus avenues were opened which helped to focus greater attention on local happenings and ideas. The lyrics and poems of this age, therefore, manifested less religious thought but more poetic skill, particularly in alliteration, allegory and literary ornamentation.

Dhananjaya Bhanja (1611), the King of Ghumusar, in addition to his four other legendary lyrics, composed one of several *chhandas* named *Raghunath Bilas* based on the character of Ramachandra. It is simply worded and rich in the use of much of the ancient Oriya vocabulary. It was his grandson and heir *Kavi Samrat* Upendra Bhanja (1695) who by his wonderful literary acumen exhibited the different facets of Oriya literature. The lyrical compositions of Upendra Bhanja fall into three distinct categories—mythological, legendary and allegorical. Like Dinakrushna who used “Ka” at the beginning of each line, Bhanja employed “Sa” at the beginning of each line in his *Subhadra Parinaya* and “Ba” in *Baidehisa Bilas*, fully perfecting this technique. He also struck several new lines in lyrical composition, and with a view to deflating the snobbery of classical Sanskrit scholars and creating in them a love for Oriya literature, he intentionally indulged in difficult compositions. On the basis of the *Ramayana* he composed the *Baidehisa Bilas* (The Love of Baidehi or Sita), a popular love lyric. His literary descriptions, expressions and different uses of the same word are marvellous and display a high artistic calibre.

Pitambar Rajendra (1749), the ruler of Chi k iti, composed *Rama Lila* and thus laid the foundation for a subsequent Oriya dramatic style called “*Lila*.” Many writers after him employed his style, but Rajendra’s compositions appear more lucid and lyrical and the dramatic rendering is more beautiful and enjoyable.

In the preface to the original Sanskrit *Ramayana*, Narada is said to have first described the life of Rama to the poet

Valmiki. None of the Oriya compositions so far referred to this version of the origin of the Sanskrit *Ramayana*. But Biswanath Khuntia (1780), who composed his *Bichitra Ramayana* in various *ragas* and *raginis*, made the first reference to this origin. It can therefore be safely said that Biswanath had the opportunity to study the original Sanskrit *Ramayana*. By virtue of its simple and lucid language, his work is immensely popular. In days gone by the ballet dancers in the Oriya *Bandha Nata* ballet and the acrobatic, Oriya gypsy women were in the habit of reciting specially selected *chhandas* (verses) from this book in the course of their performances.

During this period, Survamani Patnaik (1773) and Krushna Charan Patnaik (1815) of Ganjam district also translated the original Sanskrit *Ramayana* into Oriya and removed thereby a long-standing want in our literary field.

ADHUNIK JUGA

(*The Modern Era, lasting from the 19th Century to date*)

Though Orissa came under British rule in 1803, the influence of English on Oriya literature came to be felt only in the latter part of the 19th century. A startling change in the form and style of literary composition became noticeable with the advent of English education. Oriya literature appeared to have left its beaten track and begun to don a new garb. Prose, hitherto unknown, gradually came to occupy a large space in our literature and poetry or lyrical compositions began to undergo a great change. The prose style of writing was very successfully adopted by Fakirmohan Senapati, "the father of Oriya fiction," while Radhanath Rai and Madhusudan Rao tried to replace the older ways of composition with their crowded similes, metaphors and alliterations by a simpler and more intelligible style and diction. Though himself a Brahmo, the popularly known *Bhakta Kavi* Madhusudan (1853) translated the Sanskrit drama *Uttara Rama Caritra* by Bhababhuti into Oriya and began writing the *Bala Ramayana* for children in simple Oriya. But this could not be completed.

His short poems *Rama Banbas*, *Ayodhya Pratyabartan* and *Sita Banbas* are so outstandingly beautiful that they have an eternal place in our literature.

Gangadhar Meher (1862), a poet who reached great heights, composed a popular *kavya*, *Tapaswini*, depicting Sita during her incarceration by Ravana. This is regarded as his masterpiece. He has also vividly described the scenes of riotous pleasure in Ayodhya on Rama's return in his poem *Ayodhya Drushya*.

Chandramohan Maharana, the first Oriya grammarian, has also written a beautiful poem depicting the lamentations of Sita in the Asoka forest and her anxious enquiries after Ramachandra on seeing Hanuman for the first time. But it was Kabibar Chintamani Mohanty (1867), a prolific Oriya writer, who for the first time depicted the life of Rama in an Oriya novel named *Ramachandra*.

Like prose, modern drama was a new literary feature of this period. *Sita Bibaha* (The Marriage of Sita) written by Kamapal Misra yet remains a landmark in the field of Oriya drama for its forceful style and expression. It was followed by several other dramas, among which *Janaki*, *Swarna Sita*, *Ravana*, *Panchabati*, *Lakshmana Barjan*, *Taranisen*, are worthy of mention.

Modern writers who champion their age are acutely aware of the life around them and of that abounding and vital atmosphere generated by their time. Day by day they are drifting away from our religious moorings. Yet it is difficult to stamp out the influence of the Puranic Age, particularly from amongst the masses. We therefore find Shri Jagatbandhu Mahapatra, a popular author, translating the Tulsidas *Ramayana* in verse, the Raja of Kaptipada translating the *Rama Caritra Manasa* in prose and Harekrushna Das translating the immortal works of Tulsidas in verse with special introductory notes on each character in the great epic. Last, but not least, Pandit Lingaraj Misra, an ex-Minister of Orissa and the editor of our popular daily *Samaj*, is rendering into simple Oriya the original Sanskrit

Valmiki Ramayana, while Shri Nilankantha Rath has been awarded the Kalahandi Literary Prize for the best lyric, *Sita Prema Tarangini* (The Love Stream of Sita).

Though this great epic is now no more used for bigger lyrical compositions in this age of prose and short poems, the *Ramayana* continues to be quoted and described by poets and *littérateurs* in their compositions for text-books, children's stories, short stories, essays and short plays and in allegorical references in dramas. So numerous and ever increasing are these references in our literature, that it would be attempting the impossible to list the references and discuss all these writings within the limited sphere of this paper. Had not the people of this land been generally more attached to Vaishnavism, preferring the holy *Gita* and *Bhagavata* to the *Ramayana*, there would have been no end to the compositions based on this great epic.

On the other hand, some of the ultra-modern writers have come to regard the *Ramayana* as nothing but a collection of legends. Mention could be made here of an article which appeared in the February 1954 issue of *Jhankar*, in which the author Basudeb Nanda considers this question and arrives at the conclusion that the *Ramayana* is nothing but legendary fiction, devoid of reality.

However this may be, the azure sky, the green fields, the little hillocks, the lispings brooks and the quiet hamlets of this ancient land reverberate eternally with the songs of cowherds describing Rama's pursuit of the golden deer; every house in the village worships the *Ramayana* as holy scripture and the performance of *Rama Lila* gives immense pleasure to village folk. The *Daskathia* dancers and the *Palla* singers draw tears describing the woes of Dasaratha, Rama and Sita; loud applause follows the vindication of truth in the defeat of Ravana; the *Chair-Parba* duets bring interesting anecdotes from the *Ramayana* to the unsophisticated to leaven their daily existence; the street minstrels sing the glory of the eternal Ramachandra and many are the temples nestling in the heart of Oriya hamlets which have Ramachandra as the presiding deity.

The subject, however, is too vast to allow adequate treatment within the time prescribed. I hope I have been able to touch its fringe and to give you a sufficiently comprehensive outline of the subject.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON PANJABI LITERATURE

DR. MOHAN SINGH

I

The influence of a classic of supreme literary, social and religious importance can be traced in these directions—those of transliteration, translation, adaptation and selection, interpretation and imitation.

When we in the Panjab talk of the *Ramayana*, we include the Sanskrit *Ramayana* by Valmiki, the Sanskrit *Yoga Vasishtha* and the Hindi *Purbi Ramayana* or, to give it its original name, *Rama Caritra Manasa*. Speaking generally, we do not recognize the various Upanishads and the Puranas in which the history as well as the myths of Rama appear or in which the historical-mythical accounts are interpreted as metaphysical truths, e.g., the *Ramatapiriyā Upanishad* in two parts and the *Ramarahasya Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda*.

The Panjab holds a special place in the history of Sita-Rama and the *Ramayana*. I wonder how many of us are aware of the facts noted below.

1. Valmiki had his *ashrama* (hermitage) at a place now known as Rama Tirtha, six miles to the west of the city of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, founded by the fourth Sikh guru, Rama Das (1534-1581 A.D.). It was in this *ashrama* that Lava and Kusha were born to Sita and brought up by her and the sage Valmiki; it was here that the *Ramayana* was composed and taught to the boys who committed it to memory. It was somewhere in this area that the battle between the father and the sons was fought.

2. So far as my knowledge goes, no other province has Valmiki's, a group or caste of low workers, mostly sweepers, who trace their descent or owe spiritual allegiance to the author of the *Ramayana* and perpetuate his memory as their eponym.

3. The city of Amritsar was founded, as mentioned above, by Guru Rama Das Sodhi. Sodhi is a sub-caste of Khatri or Khattiyas as they were known to the Buddhist Jatakas. Guru Gobind Singh, a descendant of Guru Amar Das, traces the descent of this sub-caste to a prince, Sunaudha, who was a direct descendant of Kusha, the second son of Rama. The version given by Guru Gobind Singh in his *Vichitra Nataka* is that Kusha founded the city of Kasur, and Lava, the city of Lavapura, now called Lahore, 30 miles from Valmiki's *ashrama*, and ruled there; later, Lava left for Ayodhya and continued Rama's dynasty there. Guru Nanak Rai, who was also a Khatri by caste (his sub-caste being Bedi or Vedi), belonged to the line of Lava. Thus in the 10 Sikh gurus the blood of Sita and Rama flowed through their sons Lava and Kusha.

No wonder that soon after the death of Guru Nanak in 1538 A.D. he came to be accepted as a reincarnation of Janaka, Sita's father, the seventh incarnation of the Lord Vishnu. And no wonder again that Guru Gobind Singh not only versified the whole history of the line of Lava and Kusha in Hindavi verse but also wrote in the then common north-Indian literary language the whole story of the *Ramayana* in 864 stanzas, in 30 different metres. This is an exquisite work to which we shall refer again in this paper.

4. The original home of the Kaikeya tribe from which came Kaikeyi, the last wife of Dasaratha, the father of Rama, has not been exactly located; but there are hints that the Kaikeyas lived somewhere in the Panjab.

5. Apart from the presence of Rama in central Panjab, denoted by the fact of a battle between himself and his sons, there is a tradition that both Rama and Lakshman also went up to west Panjab. Not far from the city of Rawalpindi are

extant even today three perennial springs of water named Rama Kunda, Sita Kunda and Lakshman Kunda.

6. Visvamitra is also asserted by tradition to have visited the Panjab and lived an austere life in the Rawalpindi district.

The origin of the Panjabi script, language and literature can be traced to a period in between the fifth and the eighth century A.D. But very little of the early literature has come down to us, saved from the ravages of time.

The story of Rama first occurs in the poetry of Guru Nanak (1468-1538 A.D.) and strange to say it takes three different forms. First, Nanak accepts Rama as an incarnation of God. Secondly, he describes Rama as an instrument of the will of the Great Lord, who is never involved in birth and death. Thirdly, he places Sita in a heaven called Karma Khanda, just below Sacca Khanda, the home of the Lord Himself. In that Khanda Sita abides, beauteous and glorious beyond description, engaged for ever in singing to the Lord. And very significantly, adds Nanak, they who house Rama in their hearts can never be cheated or hurt.

I have purposely stressed this point for many none too profound scholars of mediæval Indian mysticism get confounded when they find saint-poets like Kabir and Nanak now treating Rama as only a king who got into trouble, now as an incarnation of Vishnu and now identify him with the non-dual Lord God Himself.

I think I can detect in all the three saints, Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas, in that historical order, a fourth approach to Rama and the *Ramayana* harking back to the *Ramatapiniya* and *Ramarahasya Upanishads* and possibly to the *Rig Veda* itself. That is the metaphysical approach to Rama as the *atman* and Sita as the *buddhi*. This type of interpretation reached its zenith in a huge Panjab Hindavi work as big and great as Valmiki's *Ramayana*, namely, the *Adhyatma Ramayana* (1730) by Gulab Singh.

While dwelling upon the story of the two most perfect incarnations (Rama and Krishna) of Vishnu, one is struck by

three other phases of literary activity of the poets Tulsidas (1623) and Surdas (1563). Nanak, Tulsidas and Surdas, all three used their local dialects; all three were first-rate musicians and scholars of music; all three had an eye, I would say a very conscious eye, on the vast influence of such creative literature as theirs on the country's social and political milieu as much as its influence on the purely religious or spiritual susceptibilities of the masses.

Nanak brought the *Nirankara* Rama down to the masses in their own language, idiom, music and imagery; Tulsidas and Surdas brought the *Sakara* forms of Rama and Krishna to the masses in such a charming manner and with such a profusion of detail that they achieved more than a mere revival of interest in the doings of these two Vaishnava heroes. These heroes had been, up to their time, royal, aristocratic figures, too high above the reach of the common man. They were, so to speak, replanted by Tulsidas and Surdas and they became the leaders of the masses, native not only to the soil but also to the mental climate, responding and reacting to the human impulses on a common human level.

What Tulsi did for Rama from this standpoint, 400 years later "Kalidas" has done for the Panjabis through his Panjabi *Ramayana*, of the same size as Tulsidas's, poetized in the same key, with the same tempo and on the same scale. "Kalidas" was the pen-name of Man Singh, a Hindu born in the Gujranwala District in 1865, who in later life joined the order of the *Nirmala sadhus*. "Kalidas" died in 1944. His Rama and Sita are made to talk and act and feel like ideal Panjabis. In this lies the secret of the appeal to Panjabi readers of his most brilliant classic in which he uses almost all the known metres of Purbi, Braj and Panjabi poetry, based on those employed by Guru Gobind Singh in *Rama Caritra*.

II

Bhai Gurdas (1551-1629) whose work is appreciated as the key to the spiritual treasury of the *Adi Granth* has, in his *Vars*, several succinct and inspiring Panjabi stanzas on the

story of Rama. Contemporaneous with him were Hirdai Rama, a Hindu poet of great technical power, and a rather unknown—for I have discovered him—poet of Delhi, Kapur Chand. In 1630 Hirdai Rama completed his very popular version of the *Ramayana* in a mixed language, using only the two metres *swayya* and *kavitta*, and called it *Hanuman Natak*. In this change of name, in this emphasis on Hanuman, the great monkey-devotee of Rama, you see the working of the interpretative human spirit. Let us, says this poet, look at the play not from the angle of the Lord, but from the angle of the devotee for whose spiritual development the whole play is in fact staged. Take out Hanuman, says the dramatist, and what remains of the *Ramayana*? This is a very healthy, invigorating, democratic and human view of the *Ramayana*, one which lifts Rama to still greater heights as the inspirer and rewarder of *bhakti* and *bhaktas*. Hirdai Rama lived in central Panjab but Kapur Chand seems to have spent his life in the imperial city of Delhi, then under the rule of Shah Jehan. Kapur Chand calls his poetical version of the *Ramayana*, *Lehandra Natak*. One might hear the echo of *Hanuman Natak* in the title, but this is merely a speculation for Kapur may not have seen Hirdai's work. Kapur finished his own poem of 161 stanzas in 1646. It consists of *dohas*, *kavittas* and *Vira chhandas*. Its language is a wonderful specimen of the excellence Hindi had acquired in the early stages of its development.

The Panjabi genius was not satisfied with the work of Hirdai Rama or Kapur Chand for their language like the language of Guru Gobind Singh's *Rama Katha* or *Rama Caritra*, which was written after them and was completed in 1698 at Panta—the capital of the then Sirmaur Hindu state, was not the commonly spoken Panjabi. Neither were the metres those loved of the common people, nor again in the people's favourite poetic form and style. Guru Gobind Singh uses about 30 different metres in the 864 stanzas of his *Rama Caritra*.

Two poets Saundha and Das wrote their versions of the *Ramayana* in 115 *savayyas* and *dohas* (couplets) and 139

majhans (quartets). Saundha gave it the form of a calendar of 12 months and Das of a long stanzaic lyric, characteristic of the Panjabi ballad. Das's work is the best that we have had in Panjabi up to the end of the 19th century, best in quality only, for it is short.

In the 17th century we had the Hindavi versions of Hirdai Rama, Kapur Chand and Guru Gobind Singh; in the 18th the small but delightful Panjabi versions of Saundha and Das. Before the 18th century ended, there appeared the giant work *Adhyatma Ramayana* by that spiritual and literary giant, Gulab Singh Nirmala Sadhu, who was born in 1732 in the Lavapura (now Lahore) district. You will have some idea of the influence of the *Ramayana* when you hear that till the '30s of the present century there was not a single educated Hindu or Sikh who had not studied *Hanuman Natak* or *Adhyatma Ramayana* or *Rama Caritra*. In fact *Hanuman Natak* was for long a university text-book. The language of the *Adhyatma Ramayana* is, however, as a result of the Hindi metres used, a mixture of Hindi and Panjabi. The Panjabi intellectuals found Rama and Sita come still closer to their hearts as their own *atman* and *buddhi*. Here is an English rendering of a portion of Gulab Singh's *Adhyatma Ramayana*, reproduced from my *Introduction to Panjabi Literature*:—

Lord Vishnu said:

"To propitiate me Kashyapa penances underwent

Dire and long,

And when, pleased, I appeared,

He asked for the single boon

That I be born a son to him.

That Kashyapa is now Dasaratha,

The King of Ayodhya.

Kaushalya is his eldest queen.

Fourfold I shall make Me

And a son each to the four queens

Appear,

To destroy all those who are a burden to this earth.

Yoga Maya shall be Sita, My spouse,

To be born a daughter to the King of Mithila;

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With her I shall my purpose execute.”
Saying this the Lord entered Himself.
Thereupon Brahma to the *devatas* (gods) spoke:
“In the dynasty of Raghu shall be born
As a man, the Lord of all.
Ye all, His own forms, shall take birth
As *banaras* (monkeys) midst the forests,
And serve the Lord
So long as He stays on the earth.”
The earth was thus assured
Of delivery from suffering and sin;
To her sphere returned,
As to his Lotus-Home, Brahma.
When the Lord took birth,
The Sun was in the constellation Mekha,
The Moon in Brikha,
Mercury in Kanya,
Jupiter in Karka,
Venus in Meena.
In the five *bhutas* (elements) was the Lord draped.
How His Form delighted the millions of the devas.
That Supreme Self,
Unmeditable according to the Vedas,
To the love of the *bhaktas* (devotees) yields
And to material eyes makes manifest:
Beautiful like the ocean,
With a charming darkish hue,
With four arms, yellow robes,
Eyes like deep forest alcoves,
Gold rings hanging from the lobes,
Resplendent with the light of a thousand suns,
Holding a mace, a lotus, a disc and a wreath,
Radiating joy to seekers all.

Rama is the Adi Vishnu Narayana,
The daughter of Janaka is Lakshmi Herself,
Whom the Rishis call Yoga Maya.

The Great Serpent appears as Lakshman.
 Veiled by the three *gunas* (qualities) of his Maya,
 Rama appears in many forms.

With *Rajas guna*

He is Mahat, the Great,
 The Nourisher of the three worlds.

With *Tamas guna*

The body and spirit of Rudra is He,
 The end of all universes.

He who surrenders to Rama in his heart,
 With him Rama Murari becomes pleased.
 Out of the *bhakti* (devotion) in his heart is born
 That *jnana* (knowledge), which all his shackles breaks.
 Without *bhakti* all our deeds are vain.
 The Lord's incarnations are countless
 According to His *lila* (play); countless are His deeds
 Done as an *avatara* (incarnation). Choose ye of your liking;
 No incarnation like Rama, whose name ferries
 All to the other shore.
 Gulab Singh, the poet, sings daily
 This purifying tale of Sri Raghava.

The 19th century saw another giant—Santokh Singh (1788-1843), a disciple of Gulab Singh—complete his Panjab Hindavi (mixed Braj and Panjabi) verse translation of Valmiki's *Ramayana* in about 1840. In 1831 Maharaja Ranjit Singh commissioned Gyani Sant Singh to write an exclusive prose commentary on Tulsidas's *Ramayana*; the "*Bala Kanda*" only was completed.

Santokh Singh's translation, stupendous and scholarly, did not gain popularity. The Panjabis had to wait for another and bigger Das and they found just some satisfaction in the *Amar Ramayana* of Amar Singh, an interesting version in the popular *bait* metre, which was completed in 1884. He drew upon the Valmiki, Tulsidas and *Adhyatma* versions. He has given us

33 alphabet poems and 990 stanzas in all. The work was first published in 1885.

Rama's story was available to the public in the fullest measure only in the third decade of the present century when "Kalidas" gave us in 1931 his full size *Ramayana* in 75 *kandas*, drawing upon both Valmiki and Tulsidas. "Kalidas" was indeed a fit and competent person to assume that time-hallowed name; he justified the choice of that pen name, for in addition to the *Ramayana* he has to his credit a number of major narrative poetical works.

The present century has seen good prose translations of both the Valmiki and Tulsidas *Ramayanas*. I like both the abridged and the full prose renderings of Valmiki by Ramabhakta Karam Singh and Budh Singh, the latter's work having been published in 1898. A commentary in prose on the Tulsidas *Ramayana* extends to 1,555 pages.

I need hardly add that the Panjab has had for the last 400 years, hundreds of Gurumukhi transliterated copies of the Tulsidas *Ramayana* and similarly hundreds of manuscript copies of the Panjabi prose rendering of the *Yoga Vasishtha* by an unknown Panjabi writer of the 17th century. In 1924 a Gurumukhi version of the original Tulsidas *Ramayana* was printed at Lahore; and about the same time was published a four-volume Panjabi prose translation of it. Among old anthologies, dating back to the 18th century, we have several *padas* (hymns) of Tulsidas, who is there called Turasi, which shows how wide awake Rama's devotees were everywhere.

I have no space to give details of other interesting and popular versions of the *Ramayana* like those of Krishna Dayal (1904), Kishan Chand (1913), Batalia Rama, Harnam Singh, Daulat Rama, Jaswant Singh, Gopal Singh, Tulsidas, Chakradhari, which served the cause of Rama in their own humble way and which kept the ideal king, citizen, husband, father, son, adversary and ally effectively before us. But it is impossible to omit mention of a very fine lyric written on Sita by the doyen of Panjabi letters, Dhani Rama Chatrik (born in 1876). He has chosen for his theme Sita's lament when in

captivity. For pure poetry, fragrant and delicate, I think the piece can rank with any lyric on a similar subject in any language in the world. It is a pictorial lyric which has ranged over vast distances and expresses the deep tragedy and unshaken faith of Sita, whose name is as popular today as it must have been thousands of years ago. The Panjabi people's tribute is summed up in this stanza by an unknown poet who flourished two centuries ago:—

None has deeper humility than the earth;
There is no greater giver than Indra;
Than Lakshmana there has been no greater celibate,
Nor any greater mother than Sita.

I should like to draw special attention to the fact that to Panjabi authors the divine Rama is not as close to the heart as the very human Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman; and among Rama's exploits, his honouring of his father's pledge, his visit to the low-caste *bhilani* Sabari, his help to the sage Vishvamitra and his emancipation of Ahilya, are more important than his defeat of Ravana. Another thing which has strangely gripped the imagination of the Panjabis is the entrance of the entire citizens of Ayodhya into paradise. Millions of Sikhs and Hindus daily hear this couplet of Guru Gobind Singh with which his *Rama Katha* ends:—

The story of Rama has perennial charm and light; men daily recount it. What a glorious end has this story; the hero of the Raghu dynasty [Rama] entered paradise accompanied by the whole crowd of the citizens of Ayodhya.

The poet Das who flourished in the 18th century has given a very interesting picture of *Rama Rajya* and of the benefits that accrued from Rama's rule of the Kingdom of Ayodhya in the following lines. His delineation typifies the dreams of the rural Indian mind both in mediæval times and in the present:—

Under Rama the tigers gave up preying upon the goats; rain fell at appointed times; trees blossomed and put forth fruits in due season; there was such an abundance of agricultural products that the *jat* (the peasant) found it a hard job to store grain; no one died of hunger in the land; no beggars were to be seen at the door or on the roadside; the cows yielded plenty of milk; people in all areas were happy; there prowled no thieves, nor did there lurk any murderers.

Who would not pray for the return of such a rule, where, besides administering all these benefits, the sovereign exerts to prevent the fall of one good woman, redeems another who had departed from the path of virtue, and who returns the affection of such a one, puts the loyalty of his own wife to test when called upon by his subjects to do so and who when returning to his heavenly abode would take with him all his subjects, recognizing their love for him and his consort.

This short account of the influence of the *Ramayana* would be incomplete without a mention of the fact that besides references to him in the literature and folk-songs by the Hindus and the Sikhs, Rama is also mentioned in the poems composed by Muslim saints and mystics. The 16th century contemporary of Nanak, Shah Husain, a weaver of Lahore, refers to Rama as the solace of life. Husain was our first Muslim mystic. Another in the same century, who tended to be more of a Hindu Yogi than a Muslim mystic, was Bazid, an Afghan born in Jullunder. In later life he founded the sect of *Roshaniyas* or the "illuminated ones" and was well-acquainted with Rama's life. The most illuminating though short reference to Sri Rama and his associates is to be met with in the work of the Sufi poet Ghulam Farid of Bahawalpur State (West Panjab). Here is a quotation from my book, *An Introduction to Panjabi Literature*:—

Hear from me the true *jnana* (divine wisdom), O ignorant one;
 Play on the rebeck of your controlled, directed consciousness
 With the chord of Love.
 Let your five girl-friends sing the praises of the Satiguru
 At the door of Rama.
 Why go to Ayodhya, Sambhal, Mathura and Govardhana?
 Within my Self I should discover
 Rama, Lakshman, Kalki.
 Why should I leave my home,
 And wander long and far to practise *yoga* and *vairagya*?
 Only Atma Deva (the Divine in Me) will I adore ever and ever.

Most of those who have written the story of Rama in verse have written in equally good poetry the story of Krishna also, *viz.*, Guru Gobind Singh and Saundha. Another thing characteristic of the Panjabi *Ramayana* or *Krishnayana* writers is

their very strong Vedantic leanings, which compel them not to stop at the *avatara* alone, but to go further, higher and deeper to the *nirguna* Brahman, the Turiyatita or the Turya-Turya, in seeking the most complete realization of the Self. Panjabi authors, like the Panjabi masses, are not at all strict, conservative or jealous followers of Rama alone as Tulsidas was. Not more than one or two Panjabi writers of the *Ramayana* have been exclusively that. The third point is obvious enough. The Khatris or Kshatriyas, we find, are drawn to Rama, while the other castes and tribes including the Brahmans and foreign tribes, incline more toward the worship of Sri Krishna.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON SINDHI LITERATURE

SHRI ASSANAND MAMTORA

That the hero of an epic should be so idealized that his name becomes synonymous with God in a vast community and his life and that of his consort an ideal for all men and women, is an unparalleled situation in itself. The story of Rama has influenced and permeated our lives for countless centuries. We use his name as a form of salutation and hail victory to him.

What we call Indian culture has its roots in the pattern of life and conduct that is placed before us in the *Ramayana*. We draw inspiration from it and discover in it the criteria for our conduct.

Before the partition, Sindh was an Indian province situated in the north west. Its life was nourished by the holy waters of the Sindhu. Some of the finest verses of the Vedas were sung on its banks; some of the finest philosophical speculations ever indulged in by man were inspired by its vast expanse of water and its perennial flow; some of the finest flowers of culture and creative genius were grown and nurtured on the land fertilized by it. Sindh still has isolated spots historically associated with Rama's journey to the south. We

have even today an islet, nestling by the mainland near Karachi, which is called Rama Jharok, Rama's palace. Tradition has it that Rama, with his consort Sita and his brother Laxman, had sojourned here for some time. Not far from this place, at a distance of about four miles, we have Ram Baug and Ram Mandir in the very heart of Karachi. Now this historical and sacred site, which had thrilled to the sacred touch of Rama's feet, is a children's park, open and spacious.

The ennobling story of Rama was as familiar in this remote province of India as anywhere else. Every Hindu learnt it as a child from his mother, and as an adult from Brahmins who held *kathas* where the great Hindu epics and the Puranas were related. This dissemination preserved the ancient roots of our culture.

The premier poet of Sindh was Shah Abdul Latif, a devout Muslim. As a seeker of Truth, we are told, he had consorted with Hindu *sanyasis* for three years and visited a number of places of pilgrimage in their company. And when he sang about them he invariably used the name of Rama.

They in secret weave their souls into Rama.

Rama pervades their hearts: Whatever they may
utter outwardly.

Nangas do not rest: They seek Rama with tears
in their eyes.

At night they converse and consort with Rama:
During the day they bathe.

Such was Rama's hold on the Sindhi mind that even a devout Muslim like Shah Abdul Latif was not immune to its influence.

No other province in undivided India had experienced such invasions and consequent upheavals of its cultural life as Sindh. Muslims invaded it in the first decade of the eighth century and since then it has passed through many unparalleled vicissitudes. Hence we find in its history cultural influences from Arabia and Iran. As a result Sindh evolved a fine synthesis of Vedantic and Sufistic doctrines. This coloured the mental attitude of the Sindhis, both Muslims and Hindus.

In spite of foreign influences, however, the hold on our people of Rama's ideal life and that of gentle Sita, tender as a flower, yet hard as granite in her devotion to duty, remained unabated.

Our prose literature began to shape itself after the British conquered Sindh and foisted upon us what is known as the Arabic Sindhi script for writing Sindhi and deprived us of the Devanagiri script, thus cutting us off from the main currents of India's cultural life. This happened in the '50s of the last century. In spite of this attempt to discourage an interest in Indian culture, we find the story of Rama being performed in 1896 by the D. J. Sindh College amateurs. The play was written by Lilaram Vatanmal Lalwani. Divided into two parts, it was an elaborate, dramatic presentation of the story of Rama, written in simple, occasionally flowery yet forceful Sindhi, and proved to be a great success.

It was followed, in 1897, by *Rama Banvas Natak* by Shri Deumal Gaganmal, who was an early Arya Samajist and who in his later life embraced *sanyasa* and came to be known as Swami Devanand. This play is also written in chaste Sindhi, and, in spite of the subject and the Arya Samajist affiliations of the writer, we do not find the language Sanskritized. The play is eminently readable and the characters well drawn.

At the end of the last century, in the year 1900, Jeramdas Vasanmal, who, if I remember rightly, was a Deputy Collector, published a full and complete translation of Tulsidas's *Ramayana* in Sindhi. The same year saw the publication of the *Ramayana* in verse by one Master Hemandas. As no copy of either of these is available today, we cannot say anything about the literary value of these publications.

The first decade of the present century saw a condensed version of the *Ramayana* by Maharaj Tejuram Rochiram Sharma, which became very popular. Though its literary merit was not great, its brevity and its simplicity of expression were greatly responsible for its popularity; and thousands of Sindhis today confess that they owe their first introduction to the *Ramayana* to this brief version of Maharaj Tejuram.

Bal Ramayana by Sunder Sahitya and *Valmiki Ramayana* by Shri Rochiram Gangaram Sadani are abridged versions in prose and verse respectively and are intended for children. They present various episodes of Rama's life, written simply and in a style which children can comprehend and enjoy.

In the late '40s of this century, Bhagat Pahilajrai, who is a well-known exponent of *kathak* (dance-form), published a version of the *Ramayana* in verse. But in the upheavals of life that followed the partition of the country, not much notice was taken of it, nor was its literary value determined.

We have to confess to our shame and sorrow that most of these books are not available today, even for reference. In losing the land of our birth, we have also lost a part of our cultural and literary heritage. Some of us are trying to trace stray copies of these books with a view to their preservation and re-publication.

In conclusion, I must confess that there is no piece of creative literature in Sindhi which may be said to owe its inspiration to, or which has been, even partly, influenced by the *Ramayana*. I believe there were two main causes for it. First, the new synthesis of Sufistic and Vedantic doctrines swayed Sindhis both emotionally and intellectually; and, secondly, the imposition of the Arabic script for the Sindhi language cut us asunder culturally from the rest of India. As a result, the rich cultural stream of Indian life did not directly touch and influence us.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON TAMIL LITERATURE

SHRI E. S. VARADARAJANJAR

Valmiki's *Ramayana* has been read and re-read for thousands of years. From the *shastri* who expounds the *slokas* of this *adikavya* to the research scholar, everyone is deeply interested in it and it is a perennial source of pleasure and inspiration not only to the intelligentsia but also to the masses.

What then is the reason for its signal success and popularity? The permanence of literary writing chiefly depends upon its universality and its human appeal. It should contain matter which can be accepted by all nations at all times. In this respect the *adikavya* excels any other Purana or *Ithihasa*.

Even before Kambar tried to translate the *kavya* into Tamil, the *Ramayana* was highly popular in Tamilnad. In the *Cilapadikaram* or "The Epic of the Anklet," a classic of 200 A.D., we find the Jain ascetic Kaundiadigal comforting the care-worn Kovalan by pointing out to him the troubles and tribulations endured by Sri Rama. An amusing stanza in *Purananuru* relates an incident about a poor poet who was given some jewels by a munificent patron and brought them home. His children, who were quite unfamiliar with jewellery, cut an awkward figure by wearing the neck ornaments in the legs and *vice-versa*; this act has been likened by the bard to that of the monkeys on the Kishkinda hills, who wore in the same way the ornaments cast down by Sita from the air while she was being carried away by Ravana. We also have the *Ramayana* boat-songs, *Ramayana Thiruppugal*, *Ramayana Ettapattu* and *Ramayana Ammanai*.

When Kambar rendered the epic into Tamil, he merely took the outline of the story. He made changes, *viz.*, where Valmiki tended to be elaborate, he was brief. But no one had greater respect for Valmiki than Kambar himself. He starts by declaring that his attempt to translate the mighty epic resembles the attempt of a dumb man, prattling incoherent syllables under the influence of drink.

Kambar was a staunch patriot and a lover of Tamil, so he took considerable pains to preserve the pristine purity of the language and its culture. Every literature reflects the culture and civilization of the age in which it is produced, and we may reasonably hope to have a fine depiction of 12th-century Tamil civilization at his hands. Kambar's Ayodhya is not on the banks of the Saraiyu river but is located in the heart of Tamilnad on the banks of the Cauvery. He does not hesitate to compare the ever-flowing and navigable Godavari to the

Ponni river. While describing the bazaars of Mithilapuri, he tells us that they were like the Cauvery river with beautiful ghats on either side. His deep love of the language leads him to Tamilize many Sanskrit words. For instance, he will use *perumpakkan* instead of *mahaparsvan* and *pugainirakkannan* for *dumarakshan*. He observes in a stanza that the beetles in the grove of Mithila hummed Tamil music.

Patronized by Sadaiyappa Mudaliar and the Chola king, he had occasion to watch closely the affairs in the royal household from time to time—the fratricidal feuds, the disagreement between father and son and the disobedience that sometimes characterized the princes of the royal family. He found in the *kaavya* some ideal characters and he was only too ready to present them as examples to the Tamils. Lakshman's devoted service to his brother and Bharat's steadfast devotion attracted his attention and he depicted them in all their grandeur. Bharat gives up his claims to the kingship that is offered to him and his selfless acts are praised by one and all in the *Ramayana*. The ferry chieftain Guha extols Bharat, and he tells him that even a thousand Ramas could not equal him in magnanimity and selflessness. Rama himself asks Lakshman, when the latter dissuades him from interfering in the fight between Vali and Sugriva, as to how Bharat's greatness could be realized if brothers in each family lived amicably and in perfect accord. Kambar also perceived the baneful effects of polygamy which had been in vogue from the days of Thokkappiyam and he decided to represent Rama as an ideal householder. It is often said of Rama that he was the ideal *okapatni* (monogamous husband).

Another special feature is Rama's impeccable sense of duty. His renunciation of the kingship the very moment he was asked to quit the realm and his readiness to go into exile for 14 years shows his sense of devotion and obedience to his parents. He tells Kaikeyi that her behest was enough, that her statement that it was Dasaratha's order was superfluous as he was ready to quit even at her word of command.

Kambar has presented the chaste heroine of the epic as a perfect housewife. Here he deviates a little from the poem.

Ravana is aware of the curse pronounced on him by Rambha that his head would be blown to pieces if he forced any woman against her will; therefore when he comes to the forest disguised as a *sanyasin*, he lifts Sita along with the ground she is living on. Kambar differs here from the statement of Valmiki who says that the king of Lanka took her in the air, placing her on his lap, holding her *kesam*. He does not stop here but proceeds to establish Sita's chastity by adding that while she was in the *Asokavanam* she stayed only in the *parnasala* improvised by Lakshman, that the water she drank was from the well in the *parnasala* dug by her brother-in-law, pointing out that she did not even taste the water of Lanka.

Kambar also dwells on the respect shown to the ladies by Lakshman. In Valmiki's *kavya* we find Lakshman replying to his brother, when the latter asks him to identify the jewels Sita threw on the Kiskhinda hill when she was carried away by Ravana, that he knew neither her armlet nor her ear-rings and that he could only identify her anklets as he had occasion to see them when he used to prostrate himself in obeissance before her every morning. This is contained in the "*Uttara-kandam*." He mentions again how, when Lakshman is obliged to look at Sita's care-worn face when he is directed by his brother to take her to the forest, he observes pathetically: "All through these years I have never looked at your face but now an evil destiny compels me to do so."

Kambar has the greatest respect for women. Even Ahalya and Tara, the wives of Gautama and Vali, have been presented to the reader in a highly favourable light. Rama asks the sage Gautama to accept his wife who had not been guilty at heart. Further, in Valmiki we find Tara actually living a loose life in the company of Sugriva after the death of Vali. But Kambar depicts her as a chaste woman. She appears before Lakshman in widow's weeds and the latter on beholding her, hangs his head down and remembers his own mother who he thinks would be similarly garbed.

While Valmiki depicts Rama as a perfectly human person, Kambar specifically states in many places that he is an incar-

nation of Vishnu and that Sita is Lakshmi herself. Among Rama's ennobling qualities we find one predominant feature. His idea of universal brotherhood and his eagerness to uplift the lower classes are clearly expressed in the words he addresses to Vibhishana—telling him that originally they were four brothers and that with the addition of Guha, Sugriva and Vibhishana himself the number rises to seven.

Kambar deviates from the original in his version of Sita's wedding. According to Valmiki this event takes place before puberty. But Kambar differs from him and we find the Gandharva form described here. Rama and Sita meet each other even before the wedding and here Kambar says, "*Annalum Nokkunam avalum nokkinal.*" The poet is careful to tell us that it was the hero who glanced first, thereby assuring us of Sita's modesty.

Excepting deviations like this, we find Kambar adhering to the main incidents and following closely some of Valmiki's stanzas.

In short, the poet has presented to us in this *kavyam* ideal characters, whom we may copy as models of selflessness and embodiments of love, truth and integrity. Hanuman tells Rama after his return from Lanka, that he saw in the *Asokavanam* not the form of Sita, but only the delectable dance of three rare virtues, *viz.*, high and noble birth, inordinate patience and unsullied chastity, of which Sita was the supreme embodiment. Rama comes to the earth in order to establish *dharma* and eradicate *adharma* and show to the world that weal and woe are incidental to human beings, demonstrating by his own acts how a man must acquit himself in this world under different circumstances. The author himself condemns ingratitude as the worst of sins and shows his own sense of gratitude by praising his patron, Sadaiyappa, in 12 places.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON TAMIL LITERATURE

SHRI K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

A well-known prophecy in Valmiki's immortal epic poem pronounces: "As long as the hills and streams will endure, so long shall the *Ramayana* live in the world." This prophecy, which is many millenia old, has been and is being amply fulfilled. The poem has been translated or adapted into most of the important modern languages, and is one of the world's cherished treasures. It is the world's oldest and greatest epic and has influenced the thoughts and lives of innumerable persons. But its influence on Indian life, literature and thought has been unique and profound. Rabindranath Tagore says that the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* contain the "eternal history of India." The history of what has been the object of India's devoted endeavour, adoration and resolve is seated on the throne of eternity in the palace of these two vast epics:—

The household was the foundation of the Aryan society of India; and the *Ramayana* is the epic of that household....In the *Ramayana's* simple *anushtub* rhythm, the heart of India has been beating for thousands of years.

Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar has said: "No other poem in the history of the world has woven itself into the mental texture of a country as Valmiki's epic has done."

I shall try to show in this essay how the heart of Tamilnad has been beating for thousands of years to the tune of the *Ramayana*. Though we do not have any particularly ancient Tamil classics dealing with Rama's life and exploits, there was a *Ramayana* in the Sangam age. This was written in the *ahaval* and *venba* metres but has been lost. There are references—faint and fugitive—to the story of Rama in the poems of the Sangam age (lasting from the sixth to the ninth century A.D.) which contain the wonderful mystic poems of the Vaishnava *Alvars* and are as full of references to the life and grace of Sri Rama as to the life and grace of Sri Krishna. The most outstanding of the Tamil works which owe their inspira-

tion to Valmiki's poem is Kambar's *Ramayana*, which was written round about the 12th century A.D. It is known as the *Perun Kapijam* (the great epic). Though Kambar pays homage to Valmiki in his epic, it is a great, creative work. It is, like Tulsidas's *Rama Caritra Manas*, one of the world's loftiest epic poems in its own right and not merely a translation. Kambar's poetic glory and his spiritual appeal are the authentic self-expression of the mind and heart of a supreme poet.

In Valmiki's poem a mighty effort has been made to keep the hero at a human level and yet show his divine traits. Rama says: "I regard myself as a man." In the opening chapter, Valmiki asks Narada to tell him about a living man possessing every ideal quality and virtue, whereupon Narada narrates the life-story of Rama. But the divinity of the hero breaks through now and again and many of Valmiki's contemporaries realized its implications. Kambar lived millenia later when Rama had long been regarded as an incarnation of God. He keeps Rama and Sita throughout at a divine level. He asserts that Rama's devotees would get all they wanted, wisdom, renown and the benediction of Lakshmi.

Though Kambar professes to describe the Sarayu river, the Kosala kingdom and Ayodhya city, his poem is redolent of south India and is full of local colour. His charming "nature-poetry" describes south Indian scenes. He describes Rama and Sita as falling in love at first sight, thus departing from Valmiki's story and adding an episode which is full of the sweetness of early romantic poetry. Tulsidas also describes Sita's meeting with Rama as taking place in a palace garden, while she is on her way to the temple of the goddess Girisa. Kambar also had a keen sense of drama and has given an excellent gallery of portraits. He has a picturesque style and excels in vivid word-painting. Kambar's spiritual lessons leave an indelible impression on our minds and hearts. He has, like Valmiki, depicted the ideal Man and the ideal Woman for all time and has turned the minds and hearts of his listeners towards God.

Kambar, like Valmiki, keeps himself out of the picture altogether but saturates the poem with his own high and spir-

itual leanings. Rama and Sita are depicted not only as specimens of ideal Hindu and Indian manhood and womanhood but also as universal ideals. The Gita says that there are three doors to Hell—*kama* or lust, *krodha* or wrath and *lobha* or avarice, and we must give them up to achieve eternal good and attain the supreme goal. Both the epics of India exemplify this truth in an impressive way.

In developing his theme, Kambar simplifies and beautifies his canvas in two ways; first, by adding new details to the characters of Rama and Sita, and, secondly, by occasionally departing from Valmiki's narrative in order to achieve new sublimations. For example, Rama's assertion that he would go to the forest even if his stepmother Kaikeyi alone had issued the command adds a new glory and grandeur to his character. Kambar is so full of devotion to the divine in Rama and Sita that he would not allow Ravana to touch Sita and place her in his aerial car Pushpaka as Valmiki has done. Ravana is made to lift up Sita by lifting the earth on which she stood. Tulsidas adopts the *Adhyatma Ramayana* version that Sita was entrusted to the safe custody of God Agni and that Ravana abducted only "Maya Sita," that the true Sita emerged after the fire ordeal. This version has some advantages but lessens the human appeal and value of the story. In the Surpanaka episode Kambar's departure from Valmiki's realistic delineation enables him to add rainbow tints of romantic description. As regards Vibhishana, I do not think that Valmiki describes him as having a hankering for the throne. But Kambar has rescued him from all possible accusations by portraying him as one of the purest and noblest of God's devotees, full of a flaming spirit of self-surrender and renunciation.

The story of the *Ramayana* has been expressed in innumerable literary forms in Tamil, as in other Indian languages. These works, briefly indicated, include the *Ramayana Venba*, *Ramaswamiyam* by Ramaswami Iyer, *Ramanatam* of Arunachalakavi, *Ramanatakam* by Muthusami Kavi, *Ramayana Tirpugazh* by Arangasami Reddiar, *Ramar Thothiram*, *Ramayana Virutham*, *Ramayana Chudomani* by Vishnu Pada, *Sekarar*, *Ramodantam*, *Ramayana Karupporal*, *Virbishinauvar*

Keerthanaigal, *Ramayana Kumi* and others. Of these *Ramanatakam* by Arunachala Kavi, combining as it does musical and dramatic effects, is highly popular. Many of the works mentioned above are still in manuscript form and have not been published.

Books continue to be written to the present day on the story of Rama. Pandita Natesa Sastriar and Kirtanacharya C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar have translated Valmiki's great epic in Tamil prose. Pandita Kanakaraja Iyer has written *Ilankaip-parani*, *Ramayana Triveni*, *Kambar Pillai Tamil Valmikiyum*, *Kambarum* and other works. Kothumangalam Subbu has written *Ramayana Chindu*. A Tamil *Raghuvamsa* was published in Jaffna, while a Tamil translation of the entire *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidasa by Professor V. S. Venkataraghavariar appeared last year (1953).

Nawab Rajamanikam's staging of the drama *Sampurna Ramayanam* draws record crowds even today. Great performers of the *Harikatha* in Tamilnad have been performing the *Ramayana* for generations before crowded houses in a series of performances made attractive by a wonderful combination of music, dramatic presentation, humour, satire as well as sublime philosophy and religion. Even at wedding ceremonies songs are sung by women describing the marriage of Rama and Sita. The glory of Rama's life shines as brightly in Tamilnad as it does elsewhere in India.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON URDU LITERATURE

PROF. ABDUL QADIR SARVARI

There are certain spheres of the Urdu language and literature in which the influence of the *Ramayana* is discernible. The first is the linguistic influence of the Tulsidas *Ramayana* during the early and formative period of the Urdu language. As we are all aware, the modern Indo-Aryan dialects took their rise somewhere during the 11th and 12th centuries, and

by the time Tulsidas's *Ramayana* was composed, these dialects were passing through a formative stage. Early Urdu literature, which was produced mostly in the Deccan under the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur and the Qutab Shahs of Golconda from the 13th to the 17th century, has a good number of works which have been written by the contemporaries of Tulsidas. Among such works, *Laila Majnu* by Ahmad of Golconda, the *Diwan* of Mohammad Quli Qutab Shah, the ruler of Golconda and the founder of Hyderabad city, *Qutb Mushtari* by Wajhi, which is in verse, and *Sabras*, by the same author written in beautiful prose, may be mentioned by way of example.

Most of these early compositions in Urdu are long narrative poems like the *Ramayana*. Some of these works describe the life and spiritual adventures of a saint, told in the form of a story. During this period and in subsequent years, Urdu literature borrowed freely from current Indian folk-tales, including the *Ramayana* itself. The story of Kunwar Manohar and the Princess Madmalati versified in Urdu by Nusrati of Bijapur and *Paduravat* adapted from Malik Mohammad Jaisim's story by Ghulam Ali are a few instances of such literary borrowings. The impressive account of the great saint Tamim Ansari which forms the theme of *Qissa-e-Benazir* by Sanati, who lived at Bijapur during the first half of the 17th century, appears to have been written under the influence of the *Ramayana*.

Apart from these borrowings of models and themes, the language of the early Urdu writers also seems to have been influenced by the Hindi *Ramayana* to a certain extent. Early Urdu writers, especially of the Deccan, employed certain forms which are peculiar to the dialects of the western Hindi group. One such form was the instrumental and adverbial particle *te* for *se* of the present literary Urdu, for which, Panjabi and Braj Bhasha have *Sun* or *Sen*. The use of this particle is very common in the writings of the early Urdu authors side by side with *Seti* and *Se*. Its aspirated form *the* is also used optionally.

Now this particle, *i.e.*, *te*, is very common in the old Baiswari dialect in which the works of Jaisi, Tulsidas and Nur Mohammed have been composed.

There is also a contingent future form of the verb in *si*, used in the old Urdu, which again shows an influence of the *Ramayana* dialect. The old Urdu has also a nasalized form of the second personal pronoun in singular, *tun*, and the proximate demonstrative pronoun *tay* for *ye*, the relative pronoun *zje* for *zjo*. All these forms are traceable to the *Ramayana*. Some of the post-prepositions such as *kera* or *keri* for *Ka*, *ki* and *kun* for *ko* and *eng* for *taik* are also a peculiarity of the *Ramayana* language.

Such linguistic influences are not unknown in the literary dialects, although these dialects might have been placed apart from one another geographically. Literary dialects have always shown a tendency to borrow from standard works, and the popularity which the *Ramayana* gained even in its early years accounts for such linguistic influences.

During the second stage, when the Urdu language had come to be recognized as an important literary language, it continued to be influenced by the *Ramayana*. We find a large number of literary expressions from the *Ramayana* gaining their way into the writings of Urdu poets and authors in the form of proverbs, quotations, sayings and allusions. A good many of these expressions have gained currency even among common Urdu speech.

If I were to attempt a detailed account of such literary expressions, I am afraid the list would run into several pages. Therefore I shall content myself by giving a few examples here. *Gaon jala, Hanuman bahar* is a very common allusion which refers to an incident in the *Ramayana* when Hanuman goes to Lanka to find some clue of Sitaji, the hostile people there try to punish him by burning his tail. But, as tradition goes, Hanuman burnt Lanka with that very fire, himself escaping scotfree.

Another common proverb declares *Lanka men sabhi lansn guz ke*, which sarcastically alludes to the exceptionally tall stature of Ravana and his *rakshasas*. Some other allusions are: *Ratbhar Ramayana suni, Ramanam likhe bala tar jayagi, Dil men dushman mun per Rama, Rama ki Sita Kaun?* all of

which refer to some incident in the *Ramayana*. These are a few of the host of literary expressions borrowed from the *Ramayana*.

Lastly, I shall just make a passing reference to the vast literature relating to the *Ramayana* which has been produced in the Urdu language. It comprises the transliterations of the Tulsidas *Ramayana*, translations of the Tulsidas as well as the Valmiki *Ramayanas* and versions, adaptations and selections of these into Urdu. Among the Urdu translations of the *Ramayana* those of Suraj Narain Mehr and Suraj Parshad Tasawaur are considered the best. Besides these two works, the *Ramayana* has also been translated into Urdu by several prominent poets and writers. A few scenes from the *Ramayana* versified by Chakbast and Surur Jahanabadi are considered superb pieces of poetry, and rank high among the classics of Urdu poetry. Among the versions based on Valmiki's *Ramayana*, one entitled *Rama Caritra*, which has been written in the form of a novel, is a good piece of literature.

Owing to the limited time at my disposal, I am afraid I have been able to give a very sketchy account of a vast subject. The few indications I have given, however, will serve to show how profoundly both our language and literature have been influenced by one of the greatest classics—the Valmiki *Ramayana*.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA ON KANNADA LITERATURE *

V. SITARAMIAH

When we speak of the influence of the *Ramayana* on Kannada literature we speak of, at least, two traditions—the Valmiki *Ramayana* tradition and the Jaina *Ramayana* tradition. The Buddhists and the Jains both used the *Ramayana*

* This paper should rightly appear on page 76, between the papers on the influence of the *Ramayana* on Gujarati and Maithili literatures.

story for religious purposes. The latter version of it bears the marks of the Jain view on life and things. But no Buddhist work is extant with us. The Jains have done great work for Kannada and their version has come down to us from very early times. There are material differences, not only in emphasis and temper, between their account and the Valmiki account. I shall speak of the Jain account first.

Among the 24 Jain Tirthankaras it is in the time of Muni Suvrata, the 20th Tirthankara, that the *Ramayana* story gets on the map. Rama and Lakshman are Baladeva and Vasudeva of the Jain calendar and they have been born as such many times before then. Each time they have had a Pativasudeva to fight and fell. All the people in their *Ramayana* are Jains; even those called the monkey chiefs and the *rakshasas* in the Valmiki *Ramayana*. More, they are also related to each other. They belong to the Khecara and Vidyadhara classes and are exceptionally gifted. Hanuman, who is well-married, is a relation of Ravana; and Bali is put to considerable distress in soul when Ravana asks him for the hand of his daughter in marriage. The *vanaras* are not monkeys really; they have only the monkey emblem on their banner. Rama gets married to a number of women though Sita figures predominantly as his wife. Lakshman, as Vasudeva, in a rich earthly life achieves much felicity, fortune and fame; he has still many births ahead and much Karma to build up and destroy before his fulfilment as a Jiva. But Rama is in the last human birth before liberation. He has to keep absolutely clear of all gross passion and remain unsullied so as to qualify as Rama Bhattaraka or Rama Kevalin. If there is indignation in Rama against Ravana it is cold rancour in Lakshman; for the deadly feud that runs through many cycles of births is between these latter two.

Ravana is fated to be killed by Lakshman and on account of Sita. Efforts are made fairly early to dodge this fate; for, Vibhishana strives to avert this evil destiny by trying to do away with the cause. The law of Karma being an iron law he does not succeed.

A special feature of these Jaina *Ramayana* stories is that Ravana is a very fine and noble person, and—as Professor

B. M. Srikantia discovered for us about the second decade of this century—he bears all the marks of a true tragic hero whose fate calls for great human sympathy and tragic awe. The picture presented of him during the last stages, as in the portrayal of his earlier fateful infatuation for Sita, is that of a noble character; for, Ravana has been under a vow not to touch a woman belonging to another and has kept scrupulously clean so far. This version of the story has many moving episodes, offering great scope for description and characterization. It constitutes a source from which material may be derived by any poet or dramatist who can handle the situations adequately.

Among the Jain *Ramayanas* there are two chief variants: Vimalasuri's *Pauma Cariu* in the Jain Maharashtra Prakrit and the Sanskrit version in Gunabhadra's *Uttara Purana*. The first is an out and out finer literary version though the second has merit as well. Both versions are included in the Kannada literary tradition. Nagacandra's *Ramachandra Caritra Purana*, Kumudendu's *Ramayana*, Devappa's *Ramavijaya Carite*, Devacandra's *Ramakathavathara* and Chandrasagaravarni's *Jiva Ramayana* belong to the Vimalasuri version while the *Ramayana* section in our *Carundaraya Purana* and in the *Punyastrava* belong to the Sanskrit version. There is a third version in the *Ravanakatha* section of Bandhuvarma's *Jivasambodhane*, which scholars learned in this branch of study have been unable to trace to any definite source.

The most outstanding work is Nagacandra's, popularly called *Pampa Ramayana* for the poet is known as Abhinavapampa in Kannada. Along with the features mentioned earlier we see here that Sambhuka (the Sudratapasvi in the *Uttara Ramayana Katha*, who aspiring to heaven in flesh and blood gets killed by Rama) figures as son to Candranakhi and Khara and is killed by Lakshman, almost by accident. This is used by Candranakhi to rouse the anger of her brother, Ravana, against the Dasarathi brothers because of her disappointment in failing to attract and win Rama and Lakshman for herself. A time comes when, at the death of Lakshman, Rama's vision becomes so blurred and his soul so heavy that he carries the

corpse of his brother. The gods then have to intervene and restore his sanity and wisdom and to remind him of his purpose. Only when the delusion clears and his karma is liquidated through *tapas*, is Rama cleansed and fit for Kevalatva. Naga-candra rises to the occasion. He excels in the management of quiet and profound situations, of moments requiring tenderness and in the presentation of the more purely human episodes though he is not as adequate a narrator of the battle scenes as some other poets in the language.

Among the lesser lights, Kumudendu (c. 1275) wielded a fine pen. He was the first Jain poet to use the then *satapadi* metre, popular at the period and of which he used three or four varieties, and the *ragale* metre which has a running verse pattern with complete sequence. We find no special literary depth, intensity or originality to startle, hold and impress us. More popular is the *sangatya* mode used by Devappa, though his work and that of others is less satisfying than Kumudendu's work when viewed from the literary angle.

There are many works in Kannada which deal with the story of the *Ramayana* as taken from the *Ananda Ramayana*, the *Adbhuta Ramayana*, the *Ranganatha Ramayana*, the *Parasurama Ramayana* and from Puranas like the *Padma Purana*. Almost every variation in the story finds some echo or reflection in some work here.

The most noteworthy representative of the Valmiki version is the *Ramayana* by one Narahari of Torave, which is near modern Bijapur. Narahari was a Brahmin poet and used what is called the *Bhamini Satpada* metre. He liked to call himself a Kumara Valmiki even as Naranappa called himself Kumara Vyasa. His work is divided into six major sections and consists of 109 *sandhis*. Fifty-five of these are devoted to the "*Yuddhakanda*"—an account of the last fight between Rama and Ravana and their armies—a feeble narration lacking both vigour and imagination. He works a small change here and there on the main story, making a situation or detail pretty. Rama Bhakti and Rama's divinity are underscored and stressed at all points. The Bhakti movement had established itself

in the Kannada country by his time and it is as an incarnation of Vishnu that Rama is praised and presented, an act which takes away from the work all the spaciousness and human dignity which is so great a feature of Valmiki's epic.

There are many prose translations and expositions of the *Ramayana*, which were carried out round about the 17th century. One of them, written under the auspices of Camaraja (1617-37), is called the *Camarajoktivilasa Kannada Ramayana*. It is rendered by a learned writer Virupaksha. I do not think any other version of the Valmiki *Ramayana* of any merit is extant in Kannada.

Separate episodes from and parts of the *Ramayana* have, however, been popular in the country; episodes like the *Kausalya Parinaya*, *Ahalya Uddhara*, *Sita Kalyana*, *Parasurama Sandhi*, *Padukagrahana*, *Pancavati*, *Sugrivasakhyā*, the *Sabari Darsana*, *Cudamani* and *Lankadahana*, the Vibhishana counsel, etc. The most popular, however, is *Sitavanavasa* and the *Lava-Kusa* episode in the *Asvamedha* part, which in the opinion of modern scholars may not quite be a part of the original *Ramayana*. The most notable work on this subject is what appears as an inset in the *Jaimini Bharata* by Lakshmisa (16th century). When Arjuna is about to be brought down to the earth by his son Babhruvahana—by Citra—the fight between father and son is described as being fiercer than that between Rama and his twin children. And this *Uttara Rama Katha* is then narrated. Vividness, naturalness, a sensitive presentation of atmosphere, pathos and a sort of valour, which if conventional is still lively, distinguishes this polished work by Lakshmisa.

Not until we come to "Muddana" do we meet with a quality half as good as Lakshmisa's, and with "Muddana" we come to our own century. But a decade or two before his translations and adaptations in verse and drama appeared, episodes from the *Ramayana* had been dramatized and presented in the court of Shri Camaraja Wodeyar in Mysore, elsewhere in south Kanara and in parts of north Karnataka,

"Muddana" is the pen-name of Lakshminaranappa from Coondapur (south Kanara). Despite the fact that diction, structure and description are based on conventional models, the innovations made by him in his *Ramasvamedha* are quite modern in spirit. He narrates the story to his beloved wife Manorama, the narration being punctuated with a dialogue between the two. She pulls him up whenever she thinks he ought to do better with himself or with his theme—she questions him about the ethics of a matter of conduct or attitude and pokes fun at him with regard to some stylistic or substantive feature of his work. The conversation, both as a framework and literary innovation, is delightful and gives us the picture of an affectionate young couple and of the home-life of a Kannada poet. This breathes an atmosphere of liveliness and humour which was absent in our literature till this period. For the first time also clean humour enlivens the narration; and the conversation pieces contain much spontaneous criticism both of literature and of life—as the young lady reacts to the narration. The same writer has given us a *Sri Ramapattabhisekham* and an *Adbhuta Ramayana*, which show us how he was steeped in the *Ramayana* story.

There have been prose translations and renderings of the *Ramayana* by Pattabhirama Sastry, Doddabele Narayana Sastry, D. Alasingrachar and M. S. Subrahmanya Sastry—to mention only the best known of those which give the whole *Ramayana* story in simple Kannada. One or two of these writers have given full notes on certain points, along with a regular translation of the text.

Recently a *Janapriya Ramayana* was written for the Mysore Adult Education Council by Shri K. V. Puttappa, the most outstanding poet of our time in our part of the country. Professor Puttappa, who has distinguished himself in many forms of Kannada literature, has also produced the equivalent of a major epic in Kannada in his *Ramayana Darsanam*, which consists of 1,000 pages and extends into 25,000 lines. All that has been felt, thought and said so far on the *Ramayana* anywhere and all the knowledge, vision and craftsmanship which the writer had assimilated have gone into the making of this

work, the largest single achievement in modern Kannada. Shri Puttappa worked 10 years on the job, and as an example of a poet's dedication to his art his is the most stimulating one. There are passages of rich narration and descriptions of nature to which one thrills as one does to music. Men and women like Manthare, Sabari, Urmila and Ahalya, who do not get much mention elsewhere, are dealt with at some length, while shrewd observations add to our understanding of motive, attitude and personality. One also sees the effect that the writing and outlook of writers such as Tagore have had on the vision and workmanship of this poet.

Rama is presented in other smaller literary efforts and I shall speak only of three of them here—of *Ahalya* by P. T. Narasimhachar, of *Sri Rama Pariksanam* by D. V. Gundappa and of the *Adikavi Valmiki* by Masti. All three are writers of high merit in modern Kannada literature. *Ahalya* is a play in song and verse in which the poet has tried to present the picture of the fall and resurrection of Ahalya and given us a view of love which is fresh and thoughtful. One or two songs in the play are magnificent and the whole piece is artistically well-conceived and executed.

Sri Rama Pariksanam by D. V. Gundappa is an inquiry into the conduct of Rama in a few episodes like the *Ahalya Uddhara*, *Valivadhya*, *Sita-parityaga* and *Ravanasumhara*. Sri Rama is questioned and his elucidation or justification of various points recorded. The questions by Mandodari, Hanuman and by the people of the world are a departure. The author's mind dwells upon various situations and he attempts to understand and explain a point at issue or a doubt. One is led into the field of philosophical reflection and attitude rather than into the region of literary perception. But the work is stimulating to read and tries to take us to the very heart of cosmic purpose.

I have reserved the *Adikavi Valmiki* to the last. It is one of the finest pieces of critical and expository prose in Kannada bearing on any poet or his work. Textual criticism is done honestly, and the whole estimate is written with a view

to unfolding the human features and presenting the *Ramayana* as a great literary work. Most Kannada versions of the *Ramayana* assume that Rama was Vishnu or Balarama and so impart a religious and supernatural value to the epic. What happened to Krishna in the *Mahabharata* happened to Rama in the *Ramayana*—and the excess of piety and devotion by immoderate people took its toll of human worth. Shri Masti's exposition and assessment is just. His summing up of Ravana, Sita, Sumitra and Hanuman and his comparison of the three sets of families and trends in civilization are brilliant. Incidental discussions on the killing of Bali and the abandonment of Sita are fairly comprehensive though the loyalty to Rama, which every Indian has, is apparent in his summing up of the hero. The *Ramayana* is throughout considered as a literary piece and some fine notes are given on the beauties of Valmiki's poetry. This work is an achievement even for one who has made very many valuable contributions to the literature of his day.

It must be admitted that we have no writers to equal Kambar or Tulsidas and we are too near our own time to evaluate properly Shri Puttappa's *Ramayana Darsanam*. Set against the majesty of the Valmiki *Ramayana*, these works have been a far greater influence and inspiration in the actual life of our people than to our literature. Pious men read the *Ramayana* every day as an exercise in devotion and for self purification; while ordinary men enjoy it not only as great poetry but for its loftiness, its wonderful clarity of vision, its presentation of an inspiring pattern of life and conduct and its clean-cut and definite enunciation of principles, all of which have been an abiding source of joy, peace and healing power down the ages.

The topics of the *Ramayana* dealt in *bhajans*, *Harikathas*, expositions and recitals as well as in folklore and folk-drama have played a great part in shaping the lives and ideals of our people. The influence the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* has wielded on human conduct and attitude and in cleansing the springs of impulse and behaviour has been phenomenal. Not the Vedas or the Upanishads, nor even

directly the Smritis can be said to have made such a powerful impact on our people as the two epics have done. One cannot measure the extent of the liberation of thought and creative imagination which occurs when a poet reads his Valmiki or the feeling of elevation when an earnest student of human life reads it for strength or delight. The utterance of Sri Rama, therefore, becomes true for all time: *Yavat sthasyanti girayah Saritas ca mahitalc. Tavat Ramayana katha Lokesu pracarisyati*. And one hopes that in the coming centuries as well our own people will listen when Valmiki speaks to them of Rama, Hanuman, Sita, Sumitra, Bharat and Vibhishana.

What the future has in store for us we cannot say. But the modern poet like his predecessors continues to be thrilled by the lilt, the cadence and by the beauty of Valmiki's poetry. By its art he will surely be urged to forms of expression adequate to the situation in which he finds himself. He will continue to derive both literary and spiritual inspiration from the *Ramayana*:—

*Ascaryam idam akhyanam Muninam samprakirtitam
Param kavinam adharam Sarvasruti manoharam.*

THE INFLUENCE OF THE RAMAYANA

SHRI KAKASAHEB KALELKAR *

When Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1915 he hastened to reach Shantiniketan to meet his friend, Din Bandhu Andrews, and the members of his *ashram*, who were then staying as guests at Shantiniketan. The students as usual went to Gandhiji for his autograph. It was a fashion in those days to get written answers to some hackneyed questions in the autograph book such as: "What is your favourite flower?" "What colour do you like best?" "Who is your favourite author?" One such question asked of Mahatmaji was: "Which, in your

* Kakasaheb Kalelkar was to inaugurate the symposium but he could not attend the conference as he had to be in Japan.

opinion, is the best novel ever written?" Gandhiji's reply surprised me. He quietly wrote: "The *Ramayana*." I knew that the poet Tagore also held this view about the *Ramayana* but I was not prepared for such an answer from a devout Rama *bhakta* like Mahatmaji; he had given it as his opinion that the *Ramayana* was a novel, perhaps a historical novel.

This theory is supported by orthodox tradition also. There is a popular belief that Valmiki wrote his *Ramayana* and demanded of Sri Vishnu that he should take on an *avatar* during which he should act exactly as Valmiki's hero. The Lord, it is said, accepted the demand and satisfied Valmiki. There is another popular belief that Hanuman also wrote a *Ramayana*, and went to the Lord with a similar request. The Lord said: "You are a bit late, Hanuman. Valmiki came before you; and I have signed a pledge that I shall act during *Rama-avatar*, exactly as described by Valmiki. "But," the Lord said in order to console Hanuman, "You will, in the Kali Yuga (age), become Tulsidas and will write a *Ramayana* of your own; and although Valmiki's *Ramayana* will be historically accurate, yours will be accepted by the world as more satisfying and will be more popular with the people." Both these mythological stories point to the fact that the *Ramayana* originally was intended to be a chronicle of events.

Valmiki's *Ramayana* itself supports the theory that it is a novel. It begins with a story which relates how the sage Valmiki had gone for a bath to a sacred tank when he saw a cruel hunter shoot a Krauncha bird as it was about to pair with its mate. The poet was overwhelmed with pity and cursed the inhuman fowler to be dishonoured in all his *avatars* and in the years left to him on earth. The poet discovered that he had unconsciously so framed the curse that it had taken on the form of a new metre, which he called *Anushtup*. That it should have been born out of hate was a discovery which saddened him immensely.

The birth of a new metre being a great event, it was felt that it should be utilized for a noble purpose. The sage Narada, whose wisdom was coupled with a passionate sense of justice

and love of humanity, appeared before Valmiki and advised him to dedicate his metre to the lofty purpose of depicting the life and exploits of an ideal king, narrating in detail the virtues which an ideal king should possess. Enthused, Valmiki decided to write such a story, and so the great *Ramayana* came into being.

It is not necessary, however, to assume that there was no such king as Rama, or that the *Ramayana* is purely a figment of the imagination. Let us concede that the *Ramayana* is a historical novel, centering around a historical figure and that Valmiki utilized the story to depict the eternal conflict between good and evil. The incident he had recently witnessed in which two loving beings had been separated by the power of evil and their consequent grief was still fresh in his mind. He, therefore, wrote the story of how the wicked demon Ravana kidnapped Sita, and brought acute misery into Rama's life as well as hers over a number of years; although Ravana was punished and killed, and Sita restored to Rama, their happiness was short-lived. Hence it comes that the story of Rama is a story of eternal grief. As Bhavabhuti's Rama poignantly remarks: "*Dukkha samvedanayaiva Rame chaitanyamahitam*"—"Rama has come to life only to experience pain and sorrow." It also shows how men and women of character can rise to Himalayan heights of nobility by that alchemy which enables them to turn their very grief and frustration into salvation.

Rama's story captured the imagination of several Indian poets. Classical poets and folk poets vied with each other in depicting the story of Rama in their own way, so that each version is completely different from the other. Valmiki's *Ramayana* differs from the Tulsi *Ramayana* even on facts about Rama's life. This element lends support to the view that the story of Rama owes much to the author's imagination, and that each poet has made it a vehicle for depicting his own pattern of what ideal kingship connotes.

There is no poet in India, worth the name, who has not at some time or other tried his hand at depicting the epic of Rama and Sita.

And what an infinite variety of themes is to be found in the story! Gods, demons, men, animals, birds, beasts, are all there, and they make one family. One is not surprised to find monkeys fighting with demons, a vulture attacking the king of Ceylon, bears co-operating with monkeys to build a bridge across the ocean. The Aryans, the non-Aryans, the tribes from hill and plain, all, contribute to the richness of the story.

In Maharashtra, one poet alone, Moropanth, has written a hundred and eight *Ramayanas*, describing the story of Rama in a hundred and eight different ways and styles. In one *Ramayana*, known as *Sita-Ramayana*, the poet has made Sita relate her entire story in detail, especially the incidents connected with her life in the woods and her captivity in Lanka, to her sisters-in-law. The story has, therefore, acquired a feminine grace which is all its own. In Bengal we have the *Kritivas Ramayana*, in Gujarat the *Girdhar Ramayana*, in Maharashtra the *Bhavarth Ramayana* and the *Rama Vijay*, while in the south, we have the *Kamba Ramayana*. The Assamese also have their own *Ramayana*. In Kannada and in Malayalam, we still find people reciting the beauties of the story of Rama every evening in their respective languages.

Even the Bhils and other *adivasis* sing the story of Rama in their own dialects.

The fact that the self-same story forms the central theme in prose and poetry in almost each and every language of India, has its unifying value. The *Ramayana* has unified the social ideals of India. In poetry it has set a standard for the delineation of scenes and situations in Indian life. It would be a very important item of research to collect all the idioms and proverbs which occur in these works. Pilgrims throughout the ages have associated various places in India with the story of Rama. Even among the Sanskrit poets, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Kshamendra and others down to Venkatadawri, who flourished in the 17th century, the story of Rama has been woven into the geography of India.

Then again, we have pictures of an ideal king like Rama and ideal wives like Sita and Mandodari; an ideal father like

Dasaratha; an ideal preceptor like Vishwamitra; an ideal purohit like Vashishta; an ideal Vedantin (philosopher-king) like Janaka; ideal brothers like Lakshman and Bharat; an ideal servant like Hanuman; an ideal devotee like Shabari; an ideal feathered-friend like Jatayu; ideal mothers like Kausalya, Sumitra and Anjana; an ideal enemy like Ravana; an ideal peace-maker like Vibhishana; and an ideal picture of *tamasic* (inert) strength like Kumbhakarna.

Can we say, however, that we have the picture of an ideal *praja* (nation) in the *Ramayana*? One feels nothing but pity and contempt for the *Ramayani praja*. When King Dasaratha asks them whether they approve of the selection of Rama as the heir apparent to the throne, they all acclaim the choice and are very happy. But when Queen Kaikeyi influences the decision of the old king to change the successor, they meekly submit to the decision. There is no protest whatsoever beyond lamentations. They piously resolve to accompany Rama in his banishment, but that resolve lasts only till sunset. Rama slips away in the early hours from the crowd of citizens. It is not impossible to overtake him. Sita and Lakshman. But no, the citizens beat their breasts and return. Not even half a dozen men accompany the three exiles. They do not care to follow the fortunes of the royal pair. They are surprised and bewildered when they hear from the wounded Hanuman that a great war is afoot in the extreme south, between the aborigines fighting on the side of Rama and the Ceylonese fighting on the side of Ravana. Nobody thinks of rushing to help Rama to bring the war to a victorious conclusion.

But when Rama returns with Sita, they are prepared to believe the story that Sita was kidnapped by Ravana and that she stayed in the latter's capital, a captive, for full six months. They do not want any witness to prove that. But they are unwilling to believe that Sita had proved her innocence by the ordeal of fire. People who are easily brow-beaten by Kaikeyi become uncompromising critics of Sita's innocence, and they revel in making a purgatory for their beloved king Rama. They malign and persecute Sita till at last she, in her desperation, finds a refuge in the bosom of

mother earth. Rama continues his kingly career to its bitter end, and when he is ready to go to heaven, his subjects demand the right to go to heaven with him. The sad king grants this and his sons have to shift to a neighbouring city in order to rule over the kingdom of Ayodhya.

Only modern writers could describe in detail, the weakness of the people in the story of Rama, and impress on our own generation the necessity for developing a higher standard of social behaviour and political consciousness. Even today, we revel in vilifying and victimizing our chosen leaders and ministers without ever caring to remember that we as subjects have certain duties to perform; that not only the rulers but the ruled also have sacred duties.

The story of Rama is the story of Indian ideals. It has influenced all the provincial literatures, and the style and content of the provincial languages also; and it promises to be a perennial theme for future poets also. Rama will ever remain a theme for future writers who dream of a Utopia in the years to come. If Sita was born out of the earth, Rama can be said to have been born out of the heart of the poets of India. That is why he has been eternally ruling the hearts of the millions of India.

After the papers specially prepared for the symposium were read, the following delegates spoke for a few minutes each on the subject:—

Dr. Ramakumar Varma, Dr. V. Raghavan, K. V. Subba Rao, Srinivas Raghavan, P. Narayanan, Professor Kulkarni, C. K. Pushpa Raj and Sitapati.

SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

AFTERNOON SESSION

SYMPOSIUM ON "THE SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN LITERATURE"

Chairman—SHRIMATI SOPHIA WADIA

PROFESSOR HUMAYUN KABIR*

I am very happy to be here with you this afternoon and to participate in the discussion on "The Short Story and its Developments in Modern Indian Literatures." But I must confess that it is with a certain amount of diffidence, if not with a certain amount of trepidation, that I have agreed to speak here this afternoon. When Madame Wadia first asked me to initiate the discussion, I declined to do so. I shall presently share with you the reasons why I declined.

First of all, I have not been clear in my mind—I cannot say whether I am clear in my mind even now—as to what exactly a short story is, where does a small story end, where does it begin and what is the difference between a novel and a short story. If you go into its origins, you will find that it is as ancient as human nature itself. I can very well visualize the existence of these stories in primitive times when there was no development of what is called civilization or culture. In those days, mothers used to sing lullabies and relate stories to their children and grandchildren. We find from earliest times certain episodes, certain developments of character. The *Mahabharata* is a stream of stories, similarly, the *Panchatantra*. In another such collection of stories, the *Arabian Nights*, one story leads to another. I remember just now the short stories written by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, while he was travelling in a country boat, describing the life of Bengal as he saw it through the window of his boat. In a short story we

*Only a summary of his speech is given as it was rather inaudible

cannot describe a fuller view of life and also perhaps there is no scope for development of character and instincts. I am sure, however, that in some stories you may find development of character and descriptions of certain aspects of life. The stories of Guy de Maupassant belong to this category.

My next difficulty is about the "development" of the short story. Each work of art is unique and self-contained in itself. Whether it be fiction or any other form of art, we find that there is no development in the sense in which there is development in science. In a short story, step by step, we acquire some knowledge and from that achievement we go further on. There is no development of historical processes. In a work of art, we cannot expect such development.

My third difficulty is this. It relates to the development of the short story in modern Indian literatures. Unfortunately, my own experience and knowledge of the short story is confined, in the first instance, to the short story in Bengali. In the case of Tamil, I have read a few translations. I do not know if my knowledge of Hindi is sufficient for me to enjoy the literary merits of short stories.

Yesterday, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated that people very often get excited over the question of language. Language is very essential as an expression of emotion. It is born out of emotion; and certain philosophers have tried to suggest that language is a kind of symbolic conception. Again, language is essentially an expression of opinion and in that way we come across a whole world of experience and suggestions. Therefore, sentimental emotion and certain values and beauties are bound to be attached to language. That is why it is very difficult for anyone to talk about the development of the short story in modern Indian literature. We must have the knowledge of all the Indian languages to be able to speak on the subject. I resisted the command of the Chairman of this symposium but somehow I was persuaded to speak. Now I have only to think aloud with you.

I speak with reference to Bengali literature and, I think, with certain modifications, what I say will apply to other

literatures also. In ancient times, writers sought their plots and themes in characters belonging to the strata of society in which they themselves had been born. Most of the stories written in those days dealt with the life of the privileged classes of society. In the beginning of the 20th century a change came about and people began to write stories about the lives of artisans, peasants, workers, men from the lower middle classes and so on. In this connection I must bring to your notice that Dr. Rabindranath Tagore occasionally dealt with the life of the rich people and sometimes also with the life of the middle class and lower middle class people. There is another school of writers who call themselves "Progressive Writers." They want to appeal to the masses and to make literature for them. Curiously, the masses remain unaffected by their literature, because they are not able to understand and feel the impact.

As I said, I do not know Tamil but I have read the English translations of a few of Shri Rajagopalachariar's works.

His stories deal with the superstitious weaknesses prevailing among the so-called lower strata of society. Rajaji writes in the language of the middle class people. So, people are able to understand what he writes.

The success which we would expect from the writing of short stories has not been achieved mainly because the writers have not been able to convert their experiences into an idiom which a common man can understand. Some of the short-story writers belong to a particular group and write stories in order to advance their political and social interests. They consider themselves to be the greatest short-story writers. They also change their political or social affiliations. The first and foremost duty of a short story writer is to be true to himself and to his experience. If he wants to become a creative writer, he should not consider himself as one belonging to any particular party, circle or affiliation. Then only can we make advances in the field of story-writing.

SHRIMATI SOPHIA WADIA

We have just now listened to a very interesting and thought-provoking address from Professor Humayun Kabir. He has put before us some problems which, we hope, we shall be able to solve. The discussion will now take place.

DISCUSSION**THE ASSAMESE SHORT STORY AND ITS
DEVELOPMENT****SHRI PRAPHULLADATTA GOSWAMI**

The short story in Assam, as elsewhere in India, is a product of Western influences. It had its early exponents in Lakshminath Bezbarua (d. 1937) and Saratchandra Goswami (d. 1944), the former of whom introduced the new *genre* at the turn of the century. Bezbarua belonged to an older generation and is recognized as the father of the Assamese short story. His talent flowed into various channels and some of his preoccupations were a patriotic defence of things Assamese and a concern for the exposure of snobbery. More than this, he had a vein of irrepressible humour. These factors had a formative influence on his short stories. As themes he chose, on the one hand, the simple faith and domestic felicity of the peasantry and, on the other, the snobbery and misdirected life of the upper-class people. His humour found its easiest expression in the depiction of the incongruous situations produced by the Anglicized young man in the domestic and social surroundings of an Indian home. In this regard, he seems to have taken his cue from the satirical writings of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya.

Bezbarua passed a considerable part of his life at Sambalpur in Orissa. Among his stories dealing with the life of humble folk may be included those which depict the struggles and triumphs of the Kol Munda people. His most moving stories are those that describe the tragedy of Ratan Munda or the unsophisticated domesticity of Sisuram and Bhadari. Among

the stories dealing with snobbery and social decadence, that on the *hookah*, dealing with a fallen grandee's addiction to tobacco and ultimate loss of character, has a Chekhovian ring.

Bezbarua is important because he introduced a new *genre* and because some of his stories are replete with a sense of humanity. But as regards technique, his patriotic preoccupations, irrepressible humour and interest in folk tales seem to have deprived him of concentration and a feeling for the art of the short story. Many of his stories are badly constructed, full of unnatural incidents and discursive. But he had a free and easy style, a sense of character, and surprisingly, even a sense of atmosphere, as is evident in "Kanya and Erabari." The utterances of some of his humorous characters, like Milaram, Bhokendra Barua, Molok Guin Guin, have passed into the currency of everyday speech.

It is significant that Bezbarua called his stories *sadhu*, i.e., folktale. It was Saratchandra Goswami who actually made current the term *galpa* and now-a-days the short story goes by the name of *chuti galpa*. Goswami secured in 1904 the first prize in a short story competition and in later years he practised the art wholeheartedly. His *forte* consisted in the delineation of rural surroundings and he had an eye for the sadder aspects of life. Technically, his work was not an improvement on that of Bezbarua but it reflected a better and more consistent realism. In one or two of his stories he has made an attempt to depict the feelings of animals, and later showed interest in the infrequently expressed, but none the less real, mystical experiences of life. Towards the end his stories became shorter, almost like sketches, but neater and technically more advanced.

Nakulchandra Bhuyan and Jyotiprasad Agarwalla were two younger writers who showed a special aptitude for the depiction of rural types of character. Nakulchandra Bhuyan, a collector of folk-songs, introduced characters who fell in tone with each other through the *Bihu* songs. While Agarwalla, just returned from Europe, became enamoured of the unsophisticated peasant girl.

Major achievements in the short story, however, were seen only in the 1930's. About this time the newly founded magazine *Awahon* gave a stimulus to a fresh set of writers, who added something to the Assamese short story.

In the work of Lakshmidhar Sarma was seen a sensitive analysis of the workings of the feminine heart; Rama Das was a successful narrator of love stories; in Bina Barua's work the college girl was the focus of attention. Haliram Deka and Mahi Bora took an interest in the foibles of the individual and satire and humour distinguish their stories, though these have not been collected in book form. Two writers of the *Awahon* age, Nagendranarayan Chowdhury and Troilokya Goswami, wrote of the poorer sections of the people.

The short story reached its apex in the 30's at which period considerable technical advance was seen in the work of several writers. The scope of the narration was limited to a central incident, or idea, or fraction of an individual's life. Considerable unconventionality was also observable. Sex—not obscenity as such—came to be recognized as regular literary material and the woman's viewpoint, though not always depicted by a woman, was better publicized.

The period further gave to the Assamese reader a considerable amount of translation, chiefly from de Maupassant. Conan Doyle's stories had been translated in the 20's, though they did not have much influence on Assamese literature.

Just about 1940 Abdul Malik struck a fresh note. His *forte* was the love story but he introduced into it a poetically symbolic content, often suggesting in the underfed hero or oppressed heroine the sufferings of the underdog. During the 40's Malik's is the leading name but there were others like Krishna Bhuyan, Dinanath Sarma and Munin Barkataki, who also dealt with human passions and sufferings with a patient penmanship.

On a different plane were Prabodh Goswami and Jagdis Medhi, whose limited productions were significant in their close observation of lower middle-class life. Medhi had a

vein of irony, suggested in sentences like, "The glance of Saturn and a civil suit have the same import."

In the postwar years the short story has been assiduously practised, and though the veteran Abdul Malik is there, there are other promising practitioners like Saurabh Chaliha, Joges Das, Biren Bhattacharya, Premnarayan Datta, "Papiya-tara." During the war years, the younger writers had occasion to do considerable heartsearching and they came under various socio-political influences. Their outlook underwent a certain amount of reorientation. As a result, the themes chosen became more diversified, and the manner of narration also underwent considerable change. On the whole, there were less of the *Strand Magazine* type of love stories, and more of the kind which dealt with social injustice.

Saurabh Chaliha's stories are noted for a hard intellectual core, little sentiment and considerable social and psychological analysis. Joges Das's art is condensed and reflects a capacity to explore the atmosphere in which the characters have their being. Biren Bhattacharya's long story, *Kalang Ajiyo Bay* (The Kalang Still Flows), describes movingly the rousing into action of the rural folk on the bank of the Kalang and their awakening conveys disillusionment and a sense of frustration. In Hariprasad Gorkha Ray's stories some experiences of the dark war years have been recaptured. Premnarayan Datta and "Papiya-tara" have caricatured some of the pests of society, the latter having made successful use of dialect as well. The tribal viewpoint is occasionally seen in the work of Medini Chowdhury, who writes of the Kachari people.

In the stories which have appeared during the last few years, there is a noticeable concern with the individual oppressed by economic problems, greater patience with detail, less of the joyous aspects of life, attenuation of the vein of humour, less use of the historical material found plentifully in the prose chronicles of the land.

Certain general observations on the short story in general may now be added. Many of the stories published in magazines are not published in anthologies. This makes assessment a

difficult task. For example, the works of Haliram Deka and Mahi Bora, two highly individual and talented writers, are not available in this form. Then too, those who have not written much but have tried to experiment in manner and content or adapt foreign models have often been ignored. In our own time two types of the story are chiefly seen—one allied to the sketch or a kind of reportage and the other more removed from the pattern of actual reality. In Assamese, Haliram Deka and Hariprasad Gorkha Ray have written in the former style while most of the other writers, without being unrealistic, have followed the tradition of the slightly meatier and artificial composition. The *shikar* narratives of Tarunram Phookan published in the 30's partake of the nature of reportage. But the story based on pure action, the crime story, has not found a niche in Assamese literature, though there are novels dealing with crime. Assam does not yet seem to have acquired a felicity for spectacular crimes!

THE BENGALI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRIMATI LILA RAY

"The life of man is like a great tree," wrote Rabindranath Tagore in his introduction to one of the last short stories he wrote; "its circumference and shape are not symmetrical. Within its foliage branches and leaves multiply from day to day in a haphazard fashion. Out of the monotony of this mass a fruit suddenly appears. It is spherically perfect, ripe and plump with juice whether the juice inside be sweet or sour, the skin outside black or red. It is brief, inevitable, sought after by the gods; it is a short story."

Any short story which contains the germ of life is perfect and complete in itself. It must arise from an impression which is acute and pressing enough to have made the writer write. Its execution may be careful or its conception involuntary, a vital fortuity. But it must magnetize the imagination, the central emotion must be valid and the plot should raise an

issue. These are the marks of a good short story.

The poetic tradition is strong in Bengal, particularly the lyric tradition, and the development of the short story, which is the most akin to poetry of all prose forms and which has the inner spontaneity of the lyric, has been phenomenal. The immediacy with which it is capable of responding to pressing needs makes it the most natural form of expression in an age when life is lived at a highly nervous tension. And there has been the master hand of Tagore to give it initial impetus and direction.

The 20th century opened with the imaginative romanticism of the period of Tagore's *Sadhana*. Gradually, in response to foreign and native influences the social conscience awakened and a period of social protest began. Rabindranath initiated the movement with his *Strir Patra* (A Wife's Letters) which carried a protest against the injustice done to women. The *Sabuj Patra* and *Bharati* group dominated the second decade. The influence of Pramatha Chaudhuri, who headed the *Sabuj Patra* group, upon the style of the Bengali short story has been far-reaching and definitive. One of his earliest literary efforts was the translation of a story by de Maupassant. Through him, with his fine knowledge of French, the French tradition with all its astringency, precision and clarity came into direct contact with Bengali. The 20's saw the rise of a romantic idealism (of which Manindralal Bose was the spokesman), on the one hand, and the embittered realism of the Kallol group, on the other. The 30's saw an expansion of "social awareness," the urge to do away with social injustices. Regionalism, with a sociological colouring developed. With the coming of World War II and the suffering it brought in its train much new subject-matter came into the story; styles and attitudes changed. Though no group has emerged since the war, which can be conveniently labelled, the young writers who are establishing themselves today have freshness and strength, originality and insight.

The modern Bengali short story may be said to have begun in 1885 when Tagore wrote the first two short stories. They are

prose poems, evocations of mood, slight in themselves but important for the indication they give of what was to come. In one, the steps of an ancient *ghat* speak, relating a long-forgotten little love story. In the other the narrator is a road. The atmosphere in both is dreamy and romantic. The love and intimate knowledge of nature, which is shown in these stories, mark out one of the roads which the Bengali short story was to traverse. In his descriptions of nature, Tagore is unrivalled.

None of his successors has been able to approach him in accuracy of observation, aptness of imagery or beauty and suggestiveness of expression. A much younger writer who died in early middle age a few years ago, Bibhuti Bhusan Bandyopadhyay, came the nearest to it. His best stories are in this *genre*. *Pui Macha* (The Trellis) was his own favourite. His depiction of the village and the humble home life of its people is suffused with sympathy and understanding. This deep love for and interest in the village is another one of the roads followed by the Bengali short story which is indicated in these first stories of Tagore. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee excelled in this field. His first effort, a story called *Mandir* (The Temple), written in the first decade of the century, brought him fame. The hero of the story is a Brahmin village boy who is a skilful maker of dolls and icons. The heroine is a young widow whose affections are centred in the temple where the boy is summoned to conduct the services. No more skilful and sympathetic interpreter of village home life has yet appeared. It was through Sarat Chandra that the note of social protest took on urgency. His portrayal of women, in particular, is masterly. *Bindur Chhele* (The Son of Bindu), his second story to appear in print, was published about a decade after the first and has become a classic.

Tagore followed his first two stories with a historical romance of the Tripura Kings, more a tale than a story, foreshadowing a type of the story of mystery and imagination which has become a well-established and fruitful form in Bengali literature. We find the same romanticism of dream

and fantasy some 10 years later in Tagore's famous *Kshudhita Pushan* (Hungry Stones), in his *Durasha* (Vain Hope), in Pramatha Chaudhuri's *Ahuti* (Burnt Offering) written around 1917 and also in the work of contemporary writers such as the *Jalsha Ghar* (Music Room) by Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay and *Rairayaner Duel* (The Chieftain's Chapel) by Manoj Bose, published in the 30's.

Pramatha Chaudhuri's series of *Nil Lohit* stories introduced another kind of fantasy, a fantastic character. Nil Lohit has something in him of Sinbad the sailor. The writer gives a modern context to the traditional Oriental tale in a delightful way. The presentation of character for the sake of its intrinsic uniqueness or eccentricity, is a major source of inspiration for the short story. Rajsekhar Bose, better known as "Parasuram," has created memorable characters in the extravagant style of Dickens.

Yet another category is the story of sentiment. The passionate attachment of a self-made lawyer to an elephant, which symbolizes his hard-earned social position, is the subject of *Adarini* (Favourite) by Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee. *Sukanta* by Manindralal Bose is the study of a brilliant young scientist, struck down by tuberculosis, who is hopelessly in love with a girl whom he cannot marry on this account. *Sukanta* symbolizes the romantic idealism which came into vogue after the first World War, an idealism both noble and afflicted. In *Punnam* by Premendra Mitra we watch a sick child torture itself and its parents with its selfishness, while another child, who has a sweet and generous temper and is also ill, dies. Bimal Mitra, a young writer who has come into prominence since 1950, paints unforgettably against the background of a record-room, the character of a drab clerk whose noble lineage is of no assistance to him in his poverty. The gentle and submissive humility of a dark-complexioned girl, whose want of beauty is deplored to the point of being regarded as a personal offence, wins for her the loyalty of her husband—this is beautifully depicted in *Tillotoma* by Banaphul, a writer who made his name in the 30's.

These stories of the human heart merge naturally into psychological or pathological portraiture. The mentality of the invalid has been widely explored. People are shown to us in moments of inner crisis, broken, breaking, being broken or rising heroically to a challenge. The circumstances which produce the crisis change; sometimes they are personal, sometimes political (political sympathies and antipathies often influence a writer's choice of situation), sometimes social, sometimes economic, sometimes historical, but in every case the dominant theme is the individual reaction of the central character, his or her degree and pattern of sensibility and the kinds of escape and compensation discovered within a given framework. These variations are fascinating and it is through them that the particular takes on a general significance.

The harmless social and class relationships were naturally the first to be used to advantage. In his *Kabuliwalla*, Rabindranath set a pattern which has been very productive. An Afghan money-lender who has left his little daughter at home discovers a likeness to her in a Bengali girl. His paternal instincts are stirred and a tender friendship develops between the two. A relationship of this kind is so safe that free play can be given to the affections. In *Churiwalla* (Bangleseller), Charu Bandyopadhyay uses a similar relationship between a vendor of glass bangles and a young girl very effectively. The vendor sells vermilion in *Nidhiramar Besati* (Nidhiram's Business) by Rabindranath Maitra. Prabodh Kumar Sanyal uses the station waiting-room for a setting. The girl is a young Sikh wife and the boy a peddler of toys. He puts the husband and his elder to sleep while the young people make friends. The name of the story is *Gabhir* (Deep).

The maidservant is ubiquitous in the Bengali short story and though she sometimes finds herself in compromising situations, these are usually more amusing than dangerous. One of our younger contemporary writers, Amalendu Chakravarty, gives unity and continuity to a story built around an apartment-house by means of the maidservant, who is the only permanent resident. We follow the changing fortunes of the families who live there through her eyes.

More dangerous are the problems presented by the young widow, tragedy dogs her footsteps. Here the question of protest and revolt finds an easy foothold. The writers of the Kallol group, who were influenced by the naturalism of Zola and were guided in their sympathies by Hamsun and Gorky, found in the situations which take shape around a widow material for many of their stories. Achinyta Kumar Sen Gupta has drawn upon it extensively. One of Premendra Mitra's most moving stories is about a widow who commits suicide after discovering a toy in the pocket of her lover. A later writer, Santosh Kumar Ghose, has a story in which a widow secretly loves a neighbour and receives his love in return. His sympathy and understanding have been her solace in the difficult conditions in which she now has to live. When he dies people condole with his wife, who, having the right to give way to her grief, makes an almost vulgar display of it while the widow looks on from a distance, compelled to control and repress her sorrow, hugging it painfully to her heart.

Marital relations, particularly in a society which permits no divorce, provide rich and rewarding material to the writer of the "pure story," and by pure story I mean the one that has neither time nor place. Much of the work of Buddhadeva Bose and Annada Sankar Ray belongs to this category. A powerful and significant story is Annada Sankar Ray's *Rani Pasand* (The Queen's Choice). It deals with the fascination exercised by a beautiful but immoral woman on the man who loves her and who, fearful of her beauty, seeks to destroy it in order to make her a virtuous wife.

Family life in general and the special problems of the educated woman are the privileged domain of the woman writer. Early in the century, two sisters, Santa and Sita Devi, made themselves famous in this domain. Ashapurna Devi, Ashalata Sinha and Bani Ray are outstanding contemporary names whose short stories are always memorable. Another fine writer is Lila Majumdar whose family tales are wholly delightful.

A powerful story on an elemental theme is *Kanchi Bou* by a very young writer, Amalendu Chakravarty. In this a

villager takes shelter in a vacant garden-house one stormy night. A neighbour's wife has preceded him. A third villager, finding them there, draws unwarranted conclusions and informs her husband. She is driven to suicide and the man who is the innocent cause of her suffering goes to jail. On his return he finds that even his own brother does not trust him with his sister-in-law and rebels against this state of affairs.

Social injustice was one of the dominating themes of the 20's. Manik Bandyopadhyay's story, *Kustor Bou* (The Leper's Wife), is characteristic of this trend. A boy who is happily married and comfortably situated is stricken with leprosy. He lives in isolation, cared for by his devoted wife. Not revolted by the disease itself, she finds her affection alienated by the disintegration of his character, which accompanies it. The theme, as handled by this writer, is symbolic of the breakdown of a social system.

Many writers, but chiefly those associated with the Kallol group, turned their attention to the disinherited and dispossessed, and began an almost methodical investigation into their circumstances. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee had shown the way with his *Abhagir Swarga* (An Unfortunate's Heaven). Exorcism, superstition, dead and meaningless customs, legal abuses, public and private corruption, exploitation, drugs, crime, slums, social, political and industrial workers, peasants, the temptations of the helpless and the impoverished, unemployment and the corrosive influence of wealth afforded material for the pens of these enthusiastic young men. But the results of their investigations plunged them into gloom. They became either hard and cynical like Achintya Kumar Sen Gupta or passionately revolutionary like Manik Bandyopadhyay. The prevailing mood was dismay. In the 30's this developed into a sociological regionalism and a great deal of documentation was done. Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay is very eminent in this field.

In an excellent story, *Itatasha* (Despair), Buddhadeva Bose describes the effects of unemployment on a young graduate of respectable but impoverished parentage. *Fossil* by

Subodh Ghose is characteristic of one phase of the movement. The story develops around a triangular conflict between a mining syndicate owned and operated by Britishers, the workers who are led by an old man who has spent many years in Mauritius and the *raja* of a small native state.

The prevailing dismay was deepened and intensified by the events of World War II. Their urgency kept writers actively documenting, reporting, annotating. The stories of this period are bare of analysis and sparing of emotional statement. The form is compact, the feeling precipitate and the style precise and impassive. Defeatism and self-pity developed an almost flagellant spirit. Noni Bhoumik, in a first book of stories, covers the period from 1944 to 1946. The first story, "*Ekti Din*" (A Day), shows us war-time Calcutta in a series of connected cinematic flashes. We see rotten food being thrown away and picked up by the starving, convoys passing, children at play shouting slogans they have picked up from passing processions, inflated bank accounts, a bored woman in her mansion, merry-making American soldiers, women on the prowl.

The rioting which preceded, accompanied and immediately followed upon independence has, of course, produced quite an extensive literature. A remarkable story is *Adab* by Samarendra Bose, one of the rising young writers. In this a worker in a textile mill, who is a Hindu, meets a Muslim boatman behind a dust-bin where they both take shelter from the incensed mob. Their common danger draws them together and they become friends before one of the two dares to emerge from his hiding place and make a dash for home. When he is shot, it is a personal bereavement to the other.

The post-war period brought a relaxation of some tensions and a tightening up of others. Economic hardship became harsher with the influx of refugees. In *Ek Powa Dudh* (A Cup of Milk) Narendranath Mitra shows us what milk can mean to a middle-class family in Calcutta today. His stories have the charm of a mellow vision and subdued style.

Generally speaking, style has softened and there is a swing away from the glare of fact, back to the grateful misti-

ness of romance. A new kind of fantasy has appeared, an applied and functional fantasy which does not depart from life but tempers it. The writer is not divorced from the world he knows.

I have tried to give some indication of what Bengalis think, talk and write about among themselves. This survey cannot, of course, be comprehensive. The field is too vast. I have not even touched upon the very fine work done by the Muslim writers of Bengali. I have not for instance, even mentioned Syed Mujtaba Ali's *Chacha Kahini* (Tales of My Uncle), which is a minor classic of the present day. Within these limitations those who do not read Bengali will, I hope, discover here a little of what Bengalis consider significant.

THE GUJARATI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSOR MANSUKHLAL JHAVERI

The short story has captivated the human mind from times immemorial. The Upanishads, the *Jatakas*, the *Panchatantra*, the *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya and the *Katha-Sarit-Sagar* have all been perennial sources of delight and inspiration to the Indian reader. In ancient and mediæval India the storyteller copiously drew upon these sources. Young people were initiated into the mysteries of life by means of these books.

Yet, the short story, not as an abridged novel but as a distinct form of prose literature, owes its origin to the influence of Western literature. The short story in Gujarat has, in its initial stages, like the short story in other provincial literatures, been influenced primarily by the art of Edgar Allen Poe, Hawthorne and Gogol, and at a later stage by that of Chekhov and de Maupassant.

With the introduction of English and the spread of English education, realms of gold opened before the young and idealistic students. Whatever of beauty he found in the stores of English literature he aspired to bring it as a gift to his fellow

countrymen. Narmad, for instance, endeavoured to introduce most forms of prose and verse. But the novel and the short story were unknown to him. Novel writing was pioneered by Nandshanker whose first novel appeared in 1868; and the short story made its first appearance in the pages of periodicals like *Varta-Varidhi* and *Sundari-Subodh*. The short story came at a later stage, much later than the drama, the novel and the early attempts at blank verse.

Its beginning was, of course, crude and humble. Initially there were translations, adaptations and imitations. Didacticism was its life breath. The concept of its form, too, was not clear. The only difference between the short story and the novel was one of length. It was not until 1918, when Malayanil published his *Govalani*, that the short story came to be regarded as an independent form of prose fiction, differing from the novel on the one hand and from the sketch on the other. Unfortunately, Malayanil could not continue his success due to his premature death. K. M. Munshi and Dhan-sukhlal Mehta also started writing short stories about this time; but Malayanil is generally regarded as the father of the short story in Gujarati.

The short story in those days was handled by authors whose experience of life was usually confined to the upper middle class. The problems, hopes and fears of that class were the problems, hopes and fears of the short story of Gujarat. Love was romanticized, the past either deified or ridiculed, woman rendered mysterious and adored, the ancient East and the modern West either admired or condemned.

One cannot say for how long this state of affairs would have continued had not a change suddenly come, not only over the tiny province of Gujarat but over the whole of India. The first World War, which had unleashed horrors unprecedented in the annals of the human race, had come to an end. The Russian revolution had dazzled the world. The face of the earth had undergone a radical change; and Gandhiji, with his weapons of truth and non-violence, with non-co-operation which he had successfully tried out in South Africa,

set his foot on Indian soil. With the Rowlett Act and the Jallianwalla Baugh incident, had started the slow, steady but inevitable process of disillusionment regarding the *bona fides* of British imperialism; and the salvation of the country seemed to lie only in freedom from the foreign yoke. This could not be achieved without a general awakening in the country. It struck Gandhiji, more than it did any of his predecessors in the movement for freedom, that the real way to awaken India was to awaken the 7,000,000 villages, lying dormant within her boundaries. To reach the very heart of these villages an inexhaustible fund of human sympathy and simplicity in food, dress, habits and language were considered inevitable requisites and brought about a complete change in our outlook. The horizon was widened and a seething mass of humanity—poor, illiterate, uncouth, cast away and despised, yet as human as anyone else, claimed the attention of our writers.

The short story writers of Gujarat turned towards them and began to depict in their stories the love and hatred, joy and sorrow, pity and irony of their lot. Dhoomaketu was the first and the best among the writers of the day. With sympathy and understanding, he depicted the poetic aspect of rural life and, at times, romanticized it. Employing a rich variety of time, place and action, not seen hitherto in the Gujarati short story, Dhoomaketu turned out some of the very best short stories we have in the Gujarati language.

About the same time, and directly influenced by the gospel that Gandhiji preached, Ramnarayan Pathak, under the pseudonym of "Dwiref," appeared on the scene as a complement of Dhoomaketu. Dhoomaketu, who was attracted by emotions, laid emphasis on the substance while Pathak, whose outlook was logical, emphasized craftsmanship above everything. The characters of Dhoomaketu, at times, turned out to be foolish sentimentalists; those of Pathak seemed to be lacking in warm, human sympathies.

Round about this time Jhaverchand Meghani was busy excavating the folklore of Saurashtra and bringing to life the

lovers, the heroes, the saints and the outlaws of that ancient land while attempting original work as well. Temperamentally inclined, however, to live in the past and revel in its glamour, Meghani could satisfy even in the prosaic everydayness of modern life his craving for heroism and romance.

As a result of the civil disobedience movement launched by Gandhiji the early 30's saw many an enthusiastic Gujarati in jail. Taking full advantage of the pattern of life imposed upon him, he came into close contact with his compatriots in jail, read a lot and discussed at length the sociological, political, psychological and economic problems of the day. When he came out, he was a changed man. The Marxist ideology had, to a degree, undermined his deep-rooted beliefs and made him regard the world from a new angle. Freud, Adler and Jung had shown him the mysterious workings of the human mind; and he had started going deeper and deeper into the problems that faced him. A new sense of equality and justice had dawned upon him. He began to regard even crime as a disease and as an object for sympathetic treatment. Umashanker Joshi, Gulabdas Broker, Sunderam and Pannalal Patel became the harbingers of the new spirit that had been pervading the climate of Gujarat. They tried in their several ways to depict life as a whole and in its entirety. Naked realism and sex found full play in many of the short stories of the period. Umashanker, by a number of experiments with the short story, Gulabdas Broker, by a complete and wonderful insight into the working of the human mind, and Sunderam, by bold, unconventional and realistic treatment of sex, enlarged the scope and raised the level of the short story.

But it was in Pannalal Patel that the Gujarati village found its faithful delineator. Pannalal understood rural life to its very core. That is why he neither idealizes the village nor finds fault with it. To him it is a mixture of good and evil, with an infinite capacity for love and hate, for hope and fear, for experiencing the intense thrill of joy and the worst pangs of misery.

The 40's again became a period of experimentation in form. The American short story began to make an impression on its

counterpart in Gujarati. Hemingway, Faulkner, Saroyan and others became objects of admiration and imitation for the youthful Gujarati writer. The output of the short story suffered a certain setback on account of the "Quit India" movement in 1942 and the resultant changes that took place in rapid succession all over the country. Jayanti Dalal, with his bold experiments in form and matter, became the representative of the forces that were moulding the short story of the period. Dalal, with his penetrating insight and caustic satire, Ishwar Petlikar with his moving simplicity, Chunilal Madia with his powerful pen-pictures and Kishan Singh Chavda with his extreme susceptibility to beauty, were the most outstanding writers of the day.

Among the old guards, we find that Dhoomaketu switched over to the writing of novels. His later short stories have hardly anything to add to the reputation which the first two parts of *Tanakha* brought to him. Munshi and Pathak have practically stopped writing short stories; and so have Umashanker and Sunderam. Jhaverchand Meghani is dead. But there are others still in the field.

Over and above these Gujarati writers. Parsis and Muslims, too, have been contributing their mite. Some of these writers have written poetry and stories in standard Gujarati and they have been received, on their own merit, as Gujarati writers. Others have preferred to work with a complete disregard for the chastity or the idiom of the language. They cater to limited audiences. However hybrid it may be, their language is Gujarati and some of the writers from these communities, especially Dara Kapadia, Nariman Golwalla and Pherozeshah Rustomji Mehta, from among the Parsis, have been recognized as good short story writers by their readers.

The short story is, thus, only a recent growth. As a distinct and independent form of literature it is barely 50 years old. But during this short period, it has implanted itself firmly in the soil of Gujarat. In form and in substance it can claim to have a rich variety. Some of the best creative talent of Gujarat has, through the help of this medium, found its full expression.

Following closely the technique of the short story, the "true story" has also come into vogue in Gujarat during the past few years. It tries to bring out the drama of life in a very artistic form. Stories of this type written by Jhaverchand Meghani, Kishan Singh Chavda, Gulabdas Broker and G. V. Mavlankar aim not at creating sensation, but at bringing to light the brighter and nobler side of human nature.

The theme that generally appeals to the average short story writer in Gujarat is social evil. Poverty, illiteracy, jealousy and sex are among the few topics that find favour with the budding author. One does, of course, here and there come across stories of travel and enterprise, of hunting expeditions and themes remote from mundane reality. But they are few and far between. The great 1942 Movement, the man-made famine of Bengal, independence, the partition of the country and the consequent ghastly tragedy of uprooted humanity, all these forces and the ravages of the second World War and its aftermath abroad have yet to stir powerfully the imagination of the Gujarati writer of any real talent.

The Gujarati short story has other shortcomings as well. The modern writer's intensity of vision is not, sometimes, equal to its extensiveness. Love of form, too, at times, leads him to some disregard for substance. The loss of faith in the ultimate values of life too, which is probably a universal malady, is taking its toll from amongst Gujarati writers. Cheap publicity and the paucity of frank and fearless criticism by competent authorities, have also contributed adversely to the quality of the average present-day short story.

In spite of all these handicaps the short story, though a recent arrival on the literary scene, has attracted the artist and the reader alike. Surpassed only by the novel, it is the most popular form of literature in present-day Gujarat. Some of these short stories can easily rank among the most outstanding work of the day in this *genre*.

THE HINDI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI PRABHAKAR MACHWE

Guy de Maupassant once said, "The public is composed of several groups, whose cry to us writers is: "Comfort me," "Amuse me," "Touch me," "Make me dream," "Make me laugh," "Make me weep," "Make me think."

A good short story answers to all these demands at the same time. Yet verily, no writer can please everybody. And the writer is limited by his readers as much as the readers are also created by him. It may be borne in mind that the majority of the Hindi-speaking readers are conservative and slow moving.

Though the institution of the village story-teller is fast disappearing, it existed and flourished for centuries in our midst. The earliest example on record, full of alliterations and miraculous happenings, is *Rani Ketaki ki Kahani* written by Insha Allah Khan in 1800. The short story in the modern sense, however, did not appear in Hindi till half a century ago. The earlier short stories were either translations or didactic plot-constructions. The short story assumed real shape and form at the hands of the poet-dramatist Jaishankar Prasad and was charged with social content by Premchand. Prasad's first significant short story *Gram* (The Village) appeared in 1911 and Chandradhar Sharma Guleri's oft-quoted *Usne Kaha Tha* (He Had Said) in 1915. Nawabrai originally wrote in Urdu but after the proscription of his first collection *Soze Watan* he switched over to Hindi and assumed the pen-name "Premchand." This has become his name and is synonymous with all growth in fiction for the years extending from 1917 to 1937. Premchand wrote about 400 short stories, mostly dealing with the social problems of his day. His was a broad humanistic reformism indicating the gradual change-over from the rural to the urban scene, from the Gandhian to the socialistic solution of inequity. He combined

sincerity and a close understanding of his subject with a capacity for direct, realistic, unpretentious narration.

Premchand had his followers and imitators like Vishwambharnath Sharma Kaushik, Sudarshan, Chandragupta Vidyalankar, Bhagawatiprasad Bajpai, Ashok and Vishnu to mention only a few. But imitation, in spite of what Aristotle said, is not the be-all and end-all of art. And Premchand is too much of an individualist to lend himself easily to successful imitation.

In the last 18 years of the post-Premchand period the Hindi short story may be divided roughly into three main schools, for the wave of popular, volatile, melodramatic literature released by "Ugra," Chatursen Shastri and Bhagwaticharan Varma school rose and subsided soon.

To the first category belonged the short story dealing with mental conflict. It mostly centred round moral taboos and used the "stream of consciousness" idiom, almost tilting towards the creation of parables as in the work of Jainendra Kumar.

The short story in a strange setting with rich local colour and atmosphere set the pattern of the second group. In this, we find writers like Agyeya having recourse to poetic symbolism and decorative imagery.

In Yashpal, who typifies the third group of writers, we find a preference for the tendentious or the "progressive" short story with all its fret and fury, its preoccupation with victims of social injustice, its penchant for mentioning the unmentionable and for practising naturalism under the cloak of social realism.

These schools are a departure from the Premchand tradition and are yet a logical outcome of the seeds sown by earlier masters. Premchand created psychological situations to which he attached a moral purpose. Prasad was a conscious artist.

Though only one author is mentioned above as representative of each of these schools, hundreds are to be found in each section. In these three, the authors seem to assume respectively

the roles of preachers, word decorators and omniscient healers. Luckily, readers are becoming more discriminating and dislike such "reboiling of stale curry" as the Hindi proverb goes. The "progressives" are also repeating themselves, moving in the same grooves and forming a still centre. The element of surprise, which ultimately sustains great art, is either wanting or waning. Hence Rahul who was once a best seller, does not continue to be so. Krishenchander *is* a best seller, but one cannot predict the fame his work will bring in the future.

The subjects of modern Hindi short stories are predominantly linked up with frustration and disillusionment, the quest for an *el dorado*, strong nostalgic and atavistic tendencies and the aboulia mentality of the period of transition. Yet in all this flux, one discerns a strong urge to find new forms and new patterns of expression and a groping towards deeper integrated truths, arising out of a strong dissatisfaction with surface realities. Though *Huns* and *Prateek* are no more, stray short stories by young writers published in journals like *Kalpana*, *Kahani* and *Nai Dhara* show great promise. Publishers do not care for collections of short stories, but prefer the long short story or novelettes instead. One finds that new writers are taking seriously to their craft and the future of this form in Hindi is full of promise. We ask of the writer only that he be earnest, true to himself and to his own experience of life. The short story should be a presentation of the life one has known and the writer, while taking into account the public taste up to a point, need not reduce himself to the level of a caterer.

THE KANNADA SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI S. S. HOSKOT

The "spinning of a yarn" or a tale is by no means a new art in Karnatak. It is, indeed, as old as the region and its speech. There is hardly an old house, a fort or a village which

has not a myth or a legend associated with it. Many of the current Kannada proverbs are apparently the themes of ancient tales and legends.

In spite of this abundance of folk tales, however, it is true that the "short story" as a distinct literary form is of recent origin in Karnatak. It is only during the last 35 years that Kannada writers have displayed a genuine insight into the secrets of the story teller's craft and have seriously attempted to cultivate the form as a significant artistic vehicle of psychological and social import. Yet the form has rapidly gained popularity. Almost every monthly and weekly journal today contains a short story in every one of its issues; and at least half a dozen magazines are solely devoted to the publication of short stories. Besides, a very considerable number of collections of short stories by various well-known writers and selections from the work of writers not so well known have already been and are being published every month.

The short story, like its elder brother, the novel, came into Kannada through the back door of translation. The pioneer in the field of translation was Shri B. Venkatachar, whose renderings of Bankimchandra's stories gave to Kannada writers and the public their first acquaintance with the re-nascent literature of modern Bengal. Shri M. N. Kamath of Mangalore followed with translations of some of Tagore's stories. At this very time, Kannada magazines such as *Sachitra Bharat* and *Sri Krishna Sukti* initiated the publication of numerous translations from Bengali and Marathi. The late Kerur Vasudevachar, a veteran scholar and a versatile writer, also published many independent imitations of Marathi stories.

Shri Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, however, is the first truly original short story writer in Karnatak. He is also the greatest. His versatile genius has found felicitous expression in many other forms as well. He has published lyrical and devotional poems, ballads, plays, literary criticism and historical fiction. But though he is a profound scholar, well versed in many languages, his astonishingly varied creative work has never

been reminiscent of the midnight lamp. Few indeed have carried such great learning so easily.

Great and varied as has been his achievement, his stories reveal, perhaps better than any of his other works, the refreshing originality and charm of his personality as well as the exquisite subtlety of his craftsmanship. He is singularly lacking in those qualities of restless individualism, spectacular brilliance and rebellious passion that the popular mind ordinarily associates with brilliancy. He has neither the gem-like corrosive wit of the supreme comic artist nor the profoundly tragic sense of evil. He has seldom, if ever, succeeded in communicating a sense of those dark and mysterious cosmic forces that invisibly control the affairs of men and confound so many of their well-made plans; nor has he revealed an acute sensitiveness to social wrongs and abuses. What distinguishes him, on the other hand, are such colourless qualities as tolerance, urbanity, kindness and a sly, observant humour. A silent modesty curbs the over-effusive expression of his feelings; and a fine and subtle element diffused in his thoughts saves them from any untoward display of intensity. His essential element is humour. The psychological quality of his attitude to life, made up as it is of an attentive playfulness and the expert handling of all fine shades of sentiment, harmonizes with a restrained tenderness. But bringing with it lucid consciousness, a balanced sense of values and an accurate power of observation, it saves him from lapsing into the sloppy sentimentalism which so many of our writers are prone to.

Nothing is more truly individual than this seemingly naive but, in reality, scrupulously contrived fusion. The short story in Masti's hands becomes the precious instrument of a constant self revelation. Admittedly, neither in his themes nor in his technique is there anything demonstrably new or original. The conflict between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, the indiscretion of a newly-wedded youth infatuated with an elderly married woman, the misery of the man obsessed with the poignant memories of his first wife while trying to reconcile himself to the second, the flight of a

romantic college student wedded to an unsophisticated girl who can reply to his gushing love letters with nothing more than puerile sentences from a primer, such are the commonplace situations round which his stories revolve. His method of narration is equally elementary. If one seeks in these stories for complicated intrigues, breath-taking dramatic conflicts or dexterously contrived climaxes, one seeks in vain. Even the recognized tricks of the story-teller's art are utterly neglected. The language is so completely stripped of all literary artifice that one would find it difficult to discover even a single brilliant metaphor in all these numerous stories. Even the pretence of dramatic impersonality, that other writers so painfully attempt to maintain, is wholly disregarded. Indeed, the author constantly pops up from behind his characters, button-holes the reader and airs his own views and feelings with a childlike naivety that makes all shaking of critical heads look pompous and perfectly absurd.

Yet, the charm of these unpretentious pieces is undeniable. This is attested by hundreds of Kannada readers with whom Masti's name is a household word. Difficulties arise only when one tries to analyze the secret sources of that charm. For the truth is that these stories are too intimate a record of the author's experience of ordinary Kannada men and women to be adequately appreciated by other than the Kannada folk themselves. To render them into another language is to uproot them from the soil and the atmosphere in which alone they have life. It is not surprising that even Shri Rajagopalachariar, when called upon to write a preface to the English versions of some of these stories, was moved to write:—

As I read in proof these stories rendered into English—and the translation is very creditably done—and as I follow in my mind the climbing vine of Masti's stories, a feeling of sadness fills me. Alas, say I to myself, how different from the thing itself, *i.e.*, how much less beautiful than the picture as the Kannada boy or girl or grown-up would see it listening to Masti's Kannada.

So close indeed is this writer to his readers that they often feel that they could write his stories as well or even better.

But Masti is really inimitable, although he has many imitators. Among those who have confessed indebtedness to him, perhaps the most distinguished is Ananda, a writer of unusual grace and perceptive delicacy. Though he ordinarily confines himself wholly to the twin themes of conjugal love and friendship, he treats them with a subtlety and charm rivalled only by his master. Besides, he has, to an even greater degree than Masti, the art of creating atmosphere and suspense without resorting to theatrical devices. His style is virtually the perfection of lucid and melodious prose. He uses his medium with the detachment, ease and self-command of the true master. Of his stories, perhaps one of the most popular is "*Hendatiya Kagada*," which relates to the discomfiture of the perfervid young husband whose call for a long epistle from his wife is met with a thick pad of blank papers in a postal envelope.

Gorur Ramaswami and Krishnasharma Betigeri are outstanding among those who have exploited rural life as material for short stories. Gorur is an artist of some genius. His pictures of rural life, "*Halliya Chitragalu*" and "*Nammura Rasi-karu*," have a verve and vitality unmatched in the work of any other Kannada writer. His humour, which pervades every page of his work, has the freshness and gusto of Dickens himself. But while Dickens's pictures of English life and character are strung together into a loosely knit story, Gorur's penportraits are independent of each other. He seems to lack the power of improvising a story. Nor does he show that profound sense of social purpose that informs the human comedies of Dickens.

Krishnasharma Betigeri is more concerned with the pathos of village life. The poverty, ignorance and dumb suffering of the villager are often portrayed in his pages with acute sympathy and power. His weakness lies in that he often allows his sentiment for the poor to degenerate into sentimentalism, and his propagandist purpose is often only too obvious. Nevertheless, as one of the first writers who utilized the short story for exposing the sordid and the pathetic sides of village life, he has exercised very considerable influence on younger writers.

The contributions of Professor K. V. Puttappa, D. R. Bendre and G. P. Rajaratnam to the development of the short story have been to a considerable degree eclipsed by their reputation as poets. Nevertheless, no account of the short story in Kannada can be complete without a reference to them. The two slender collections published by Professor Puttappa, *Sanyasi and other Stories* and *Nanna Devaru and other Stories*, are of outstanding significance. Though the influence of Tagore on the author's work is obvious, Puttappa's themes as well as his technique are inimitably his own. The characters seem to be directly drawn from the life of the common people in the Malnad regions of Mysore, the author's native district. The descriptions of natural scenery are incomparably vivid and poetic. The author displays a truly unique insight into the motives and feelings of unsophisticated villagers so that even when he mercilessly exposes their cruelties and gross superstitions, they seldom cease to live or to evoke the sympathy of the reader. Some of these stories, like the celebrated "*Nanna Devaru*," have been not inappropriately described as "gems of perfect art."

All the writers so far mentioned had achieved considerable popularity by the third decade of this century. Their outlook is, broadly speaking, detached, tolerant and humane. None of them, however, have displayed a very aggressive or fervent sociological purposefulness in their stories. But in the 30's there was in Karnatak a wide-spread awakening of social consciousness, which was a result of the successful freedom movements initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. Many younger writers feverishly experimented with the short story in an attempt to use it for exposing age-old superstitions and iniquities for popularizing a new social outlook. Among these, the foremost were A. N. Krishnarao and Shivram Karanth. Both of them, however, have since abandoned the short story for the novel.

Though there was a considerable output of short stories in the 30s, it was not until 1943 that a really virile movement for utilizing the form as a weapon of revolutionary reform

gained ground. Since then a very large number of writers styling themselves "progressive" have written stories of varying merit on such themes as the evil of money lending, the poverty of agriculturists and the exploitation of factory labour. It cannot be said, however, that the work of the new "progressive writers" has been, except in a few cases, very satisfying. Many of them in their immature zeal for reform seem to forget the limits set by their art so that their work often defeats itself. Yet there is no doubt that their experiments—crude and hasty as they have often been—have contributed not a little to the enlargement of the material of the short story. There is ground for the hope that the present period of experimentation will be succeeded by one of more mature and satisfying achievement.

THE MAITHILI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSOR B. N. S. THAKUR

The short story is known in Maithili as "*Laghu katha*" or "*Akhyayika*." It is an important variety of composition and occupies at the present time a significant place in literature. In this scientific age, when everything seems to be strange and people have very little time at their disposal, the short story provides an interesting mental tonic in tabloid form. With very little effort on the part of the reader, he is given information and entertainment in a brief spell of time. But it owes its origin to ancient literatures.

When primitive man learnt how to express his thoughts, even though in faltering language, he also began to acquire the art of weaving and telling tales. The tradition of the story is therefore as old as the life of man. That is why primitive characteristics such as curiosity, inquisitiveness, etc., are to be found in the earliest stories. As the times gradually changed, the objective and subject matter of the story also changed.

The earliest form of the story is to be found in the *Rig-veda's Sarama-pani-samvad* and *Maya-yami-samvad*. This form became popular, and young and old alike were inclined towards it. The next form of story available to us is as in the Upanishads and takes the form of a dialogue between pupil and preceptor. The teacher illustrates the essence of Brahma through ordinary illustrations and the pupil is very much delighted to get such knowledge in an intelligible form. After that, we have religious stories derived from *Jataka* tales and the Puranas. In Maithili literature, *Bihulakatha*, *Madhu-shravanikatha* and a number of other stories can be traced as far back as these ages.

Many forms of the short story are to be found following this period. Vishnu Sharma's *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesha* are worth-mentioning here. These conveyed a moral by means of tales told in verse or prose, both very appealing in their way. Later, Kshemendra translated Gunadhya's *Brihatkatha* (written in the Paishachi language) into Sanskrit and S. Sharma also wrote *Katha-Sarit-Sagar* after some additions and alterations. Unfortunately, the story was preserved more in the oral rather than in the written form at this period. So, collections of *kathas* are very few such as *Vetal Pachhisi* and *Simhasan Battisi*. In Maithili, we have in this period *Vikramajitkatha*. It is to be noted here that the original Sanskrit forms were lost at this stage although they are available now in different languages. Vidyapati gave *Purush Pariksha* (a collection of stories) in the vernacular of Mithila, which he called *Desil Bacna*. The stories of this period were meant for entertainment only, the love affairs of the court and royal personages being the subject matter. No serious subject was ever dealt with.

The short story has been defined as "an abridged and artistic description of an event in a life." It is, according to critics, a reminiscence of some touching event, of an episode, a character or a personality. In ancient times, stories were not written with this objective. Modern scholars say that the short story should be as brief as possible, especially in view of the fact that ours is an age of science in which people

have very little time to spare for reading longer subject matter. They assert that realism rather than imagination should enter into such writing. It is interesting to note that in Maithili fiction these qualities were not lacking and are to be found in the novels of the period. Prior to the 20's of the present century, a short novel could be easily classified as a long short story. But after the 30's the distinction between the two became rigid and the short stories in Maithili, as in other Indian languages, took on a new form. What Tagore did for Bengali, Kanaïyalal M. Munshi for Gujarati, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar for Kannada, S. Pillai for Malayalam, Phadke for Marathi, Premchand for Hindi, Bhuvanji achieved for Maithili literature.

The development of the short story in Maithili literature can be divided into three periods: *Early Period*—from earliest times to 1925; *Middle Period*—from 1925 to 1935; *Modern Period*—from 1935 onwards to the present day.

Early Period: As already mentioned, the various religious stories, retold during solemn occasions and ceremonies even today, have come down to us from time immemorial and they can be said to be the earliest available forms of the Maithili short story. Every class of people in Mithila have got these *kathas*. A very low caste in Mithila, the *Dusadh* caste, have their own *Salchasakkatha*.

After that we find a peculiar but humorous form of Maithili short story known as "*Garu-Virinda*." The stories are said to be a thousand years old and are still current in Mithila. Garu Jha's stories were for the first time edited and published in book-form by the late Kusheshwar Kumar of Bajitpur.

This was followed by a spate of translations. Vidyapati's *Purush Pariksha* was translated into modern standard Maithili by the late Chandrahari. There were a number of other translations too. Shri Parmeswaran's *Simaliti Akhyayika* is an adaptation-cum-translation of *Sanskrit Upakhyān*, the life story of a princess. Jibachcha Mishra's *Rameshwar Upanyasa*, which may be classified as a long short story, appeared

about this time. It has many points in common with *Rani Kctaki Kahani* in Hindi.

This was followed by *Sunkhipt Mahabharatasar* by Ramnanda Thakur of Samaul, which is a long historical novel based on incidents from the *Mahabharata*. Other noteworthy productions of this period include *Shakuntalopakhyan* by Trilochan Jha, *Sudarshanopakhyan* by Harinarayan Jha, *Priyavratopakhyan* by Rambihari Mishra, *Satisadmakopakhyan* by Nanda Jha and *Sukanyopakhyan* by Chhatradhari Thakur. The name of Pandit Kashinatha Jha must also be mentioned in this connection. His stories and translations are very reminiscent of Bengali literature.

Periodicals like *Mithilamoda* and *Mithila-Mihira* have contributed much to the development of the short story during this period.

Middle Period: The emphasis during this period, beginning from 1925, is on creative writing rather than on translation or adaptation. If the plot was borrowed from a Purana, Maithili story writers presented it in an original way. *Chandrabhaga* written by Shrikrishna Thakur. *Madanaraj* by Tulapati Singh, *Yugalvir* by Rambihari Mishra, are among the best known productions of the period, which also includes *Dhruvacaritra* by Trilochan Jha and collections of short stories by Muralidhar Jha and Pandit Chetnatha Jha.

The magazine *Mithila* has done much to encourage the development of short-story writing in our midst, both during the middle and modern periods. The best-known writers have made their debut in this periodical.

Modern Period: Bhawansharan Singh "Bhuvan" has been writing stories under different pen names. Most of them have appeared in his own monthly *Vibhuti*, published from Muzaffarpur. He has introduced new trends in story writing, acquired the Western technique and approach and substantially altered the content. It would be no exaggeration to say that he occupies a position in Maithili similar to that occupied by Premchand in Hindi.

Two other writers, Bhimeshvar Singh and Jaleshwar Singh, have also helped to high pedal the level of the Maithili short story. At one stage in the history of the short story, collections of tales were published in book form. The stories of Professor H. Jha, a popular humourist, were thus made available to the public. Professor Jha has achieved as much distinction in the sphere of short-story writing as in that of the novel. His writings have been widely appreciated and translated into different Indian languages. His humour flows spontaneously, ridiculing our social shortcomings in a catholic way. He is one of our best writers in this *genre* and far ahead of his predecessors in the field in every respect. Nagendra Kumar and Mayananda Mishra are both writers whose work has reached a high watermark of efficiency. Among other writers may be mentioned Professor Ramahar, whose work is interesting but not original, Manmadhan Jha, a sentimental writer who specially appeals to women readers, and Professor Umanatha Jha, who has been greatly influenced by Western writers and whose stories form a class by themselves. Our literature has also been enriched in this direction by Kumar Gangananda Singh, Shri Upendranatha Jha, Professor Surendra Jha, Babu Shri Lakshmiapati Singh, Shekhar Amar, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Yogananda Jha, Professor Krishna Kanta Mishra, Nagendra Kumar, Professor Damodar Thakur, Lalit Mayananda, Govind Jha and others, all of whom cover a wide range of topics and present life from many angles, both grave and gay.

The short story is very popular in Maithili and recently some lovers of Maithili have started a journal, *Sankranti*, devoted exclusively to short stories. The short story has a great future in our language. Writers are experimenting with new techniques, finding new forms and models of expression and exploring the layers of human consciousness to find fresh material for their work. All these factors combined with the zeal for creative activity raise great hopes for the future of the Maithili short story. We have no doubt that these hopes will be justified.

THE MALAYALAM SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI MURKOTH KUNHAPPA

Malayalam literature, which has great achievements to its credit in the field of poetry, drama, the essay and novel writing, really excels itself in the field of the short story. In Malayalam, as in some other languages, the origin of the short story is hidden in the misty dawn of history. Stories came down by word of mouth and were crystallized afterwards by great writers. The introduction of Sanskrit works like the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Panchatantra*, gave a definite form and a new fillip to the art of the short story, thanks to the inexhaustible fund of anecdotes those works contain. Thus far, the short story in Malayalam follows the pattern of short stories in all the languages of India.

What distinguishes Malayalam in this field, however, is the fact that the language possesses innumerable entertainments or *Kalis* which depend upon their being told in prose, verse or a mixture of both, to the accompaniment of music and dancing. Puranic tales, stories of chivalry, legends of ancient kings of Kerala, tales woven round various festivals, all are used for *Kalis* like *Pooru Kali*, *Katha Kali*, *Thiruvadira Kali*, *Kol Kali* and so on. Like a famous character in Molière's "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*" who discovered he had been talking prose all his life, without knowing it, the Malayalee has been, all unknown to himself, a great artist in the short story right down the centuries. The greatest of all these short story entertainments is the *Thullal*, invented and perfected by that irrepressible genius, Kunchan Nambyar. His themes were Puranic tales, but by the time they passed through his hands, those stories of Vishnu and Shiva, became satirical commentaries on Malayalee customs and manners with humorous sidelights on the foibles of Malayalee men and women. Unities of time, place and action together with concentration and speed in narration were all so evident in Nambyar, that he could very well be called "the father of the Malayalam short story." Why those critics, who have the

authority to do so, prefer to forget this aspect of his genius, is more than I can say.

The present day short story, modelled after the Western pattern, forms an altogether different species and was introduced into Malayalam by the English-educated Malayalee, Murkoth Kumaran, one of the best prose writers in the language. Detective tales, pleasant commentaries on daily life, stories with an O. Henry twist, all came easily to his pen. His contemporary, who is still alive and writing, K. Sukumaran, is the Wodehouse of Malayalam. When other writers try hard to be amusing, Sukumaran has to make an effort not to be funny. E. V. Krishna Pillai and "M.R.K.C." are other great writers of the short story of the past generation.

At present, the field is held by Pottekkat, Karur, Kovur, Kutti Krishnan ("Uroob"), Parvathy Antharjanam, Basheer, Saraswati, Vettoor and others, all brilliant writers who have raised the standard of the Malayalam short story to Olympian heights. Malabar has had a very composite population of Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Parsis and Buddhists for centuries on end. Practically everyone of these communities is represented among the front rank story writers, so much so that we get a representative cross-section of the social life of Kerala through their stories. Fiction is often more true to life than factual descriptions of society. Pottekkat rouses sympathy for the down and out without lecturing to the upper classes. Life behind the *purdah* is perfectly portrayed by Parvathy Antharjanam, herself, an erstwhile *purdahnashin*. The life of the Malabar Muslim is very forcefully depicted; sex matters are too forcefully narrated sometimes, for prudish tastes, by Basheer. Varki takes his cue from Balzac and satirizes Christian foibles, playfully poking fun at the *padres* of Kerala. Saraswati is a champion of women's rights in Kerala, for even in matriarchal Kerala women hold that they have certain social disadvantages to contend with. Kovur gives us splendid delineations of character, and Karur is great in bringing home lofty ideas through little stories. Pottekkat is, perhaps, the greatest short-story writer of the day, if Kutti

Krishnan, under the pseudonym of "Uroob," does not soon wrest the honour from him, as he is already threatening to do, by the sheer brilliance of his portrayals.

The last two decades have also been the era of Communist propaganda. That part of Communism which pleads for the under dog has been an age-old ideal for many humanists and to that extent, and that extent alone, all the leading writers mentioned above are one with the latest theories of social equality. But the more virulent among the Communists are not content with arousing sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden. They desire to rouse a hatred of the upper classes and create class conflict. Lately several new writers have come into the field with this avowed object. Along with them have entered the self-conscious psychological writers, according to whom plain, blunt facts, which are more blunt than plain, of the sexual behaviour of human beings, have to be depicted in the name of realism. In both cases the coat is cut according to the cloth, and does not always fit properly. Great writing is difficult in such circumstances.

That is where the Malayalam short story stands at present, with its long and hoary past, a shining immediate past, and a fine present, slightly tarnished by political pamphleteering.

THE MARATHI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI R. B. JOSHI

The short story in Marathi has travelled a long way since about 75 years ago when Hari Narayan Apte, the first considerable Marathi novelist, gave a distinctive name to his shorter tales. He called them "*sphuta goshti*," i.e., short stories, to distinguish them from his longer stories or novels, which were his main concern. Besides giving them a name he gave them a social content. The stories that were popular before his days were mainly adventure stories of rogues and heroes and were intended, generally speaking, to excite curiosity and

wonder. It was Apte who gave them a social significance and brought them nearer life by writing about the lives and doings of ordinary people. His stories were mainly about the middle classes and for the middle classes, and the reading public took to them very readily.

Although Apte's stories were the predecessors of today's short stories, they were not short stories in the strict sense. They were more like tales. Narratives of a series of incidents with many superfluous details and descriptions. Economy and precision were foreign to them, and they lacked a well-knit structure.

It was towards the end of the century with the founding of the monthly magazine *Mangranjan* in 1895, that the short story received a fresh impetus. Other magazines followed, and during the next 20 years or so the short story took shape. It became a distinct form of literary art and created its own class of readers. The credit for this goes to many writers like N. H. Apte. "Sabakari Krishna," Shrimati Kashibai Kanitkar, Shrimati Girijabai Kelkar. But particular mention must be made of V. S. Gurjar and K. K. Gokhale. They were prolific writers and produced original stories as well as translations and adaptations, particularly from Bengali and English. In the hands of these writers the short story gathered strength and became so popular that even writers like N. C. Kelkar, S. K. Kolhatkar and V. M. Joshi, who had made their names in other fields, felt impelled to write stories.

The stories of this period, 1900 to 1920, were in better shape than the earlier ones. They were more compact and had come a step nearer the short story proper. But they were mainly plot stories. The stress was still on incidents. Subtlety in the treatment of character or mood was a rarity, though the telling of the story was usually effective. Although the object was mainly to entertain, some stories were written with the obvious purpose of emphasizing a moral. A plea for social reform, especially with regard to marriage, was common to many of them. And the moral was often driven home with an obviousness which was almost naive. Many a time an

otherwise good story was spoilt by having a moral tacked on to it.

Another turning point in the development of the short story came about the year 1920. About this time Diwakar Krishna's stories began to appear. The first volume of his stories, seven in all, was published in 1927 when he was 25. But they were all written during the previous six or seven years when he was in his late 'teens and early twenties. These stories were strikingly different from the earlier ones. In these stories incidents were subordinated to moods, emotions and sentiments. The pattern of the story was determined not by the succession of events but by the emotional relationships of the characters or by the dominant sentiment. With him the Marathi short story acquired poignancy, lyricism and delicacy. The language and the style were in keeping with its spirit. Written when the author was still very young, the stories naturally have a callow romanticism, a dreaminess, a touch of the melodramatic. All the same, the essential character of the Marathi short story had changed. His later stories showed a maturer understanding and treatment of emotion but unfortunately he did not write enough to sustain the development indicated.

The next fifteen-year period, from 1920 to 1935, registers a development in many directions. In many ways it was a period of ferment and activity in all branches of Marathi literature. During this period, foreign authors like O. Henry, de Maupassant, Galsworthy, Hardy, Chekhov and D. H. Lawrence and Indian writers like Tagore, Premchand and others were read and discussed. So their writings had an indirect influence on the Marathi short story. This was also the period during which the ideas of Marx and Freud, Russell and Shaw, were in the air and were influencing the mind and thought of the intelligentsia. In the sphere of the short story this period saw many new trends and authors. In the 20's, while Diwakar Krishna's stories were ushering in a new era, two other short story writers, Professor N. S. Phadke and V. S. Khandekar, appeared in the field. In course of time they became very popular and set the standard of taste for the common reader.

Also in 1928 there appeared a monthly magazine, *Yeshwant*, devoted exclusively to the publication of short stories. This gave an added impetus to the growth of the story.

Artistically, Professor Phadke's story is a development on the pre-1820 story. Technically, it is more faultless. There is more finish and polish to it. It has been trimmed and made spruce. The excesses have been eschewed. The language has an urbane quality, and entertainment is its main concern. He gave a theoretical basis to his writing by publishing a work on the craft of writing and came to be considered a protagonist of "Art for Art's sake." His earlier stories have considerable inner substance and structural qualities. But later on, it appeared that what he gained in finish and polish he lost in depth and subtlety. In his later stories "Art for Art's sake" came to mean art for just entertainment's sake and at times there tended to be all craft and no art.

Opposed to this trend was V. S. Khandekar who championed the cause of "Art for Life's sake." Both in his life and art he was inspired by an adolescent idealism and sentimentalism. He wanted to serve humanity and he wanted his art to do the same. It was the time when the clash between the exploiter and the exploited was being brought to the fore. One great national movement had taken place and another was in the offing. Khandekar exposed the evils of society in his writings. He championed the cause of the woman, the labourer, the poor teacher and the self-sacrificing social worker. But he also had a passion for metaphor and simile, for coining phrases and proverbs. His writing was literally studded with scintillating words and phrases. This made his writing, especially his dialogue, very artificial and unreal.

If Phadke captured the reader with his technical polish and entertaining themes, Khandekar did the same with his pseudo-idealism and his style. If Phadke's story was a development of the pre-1920 story on the technical side, Khandekar's was a development of it on the side of content. The same zeal for social reform that was seen in many of the earlier stories is to be seen in his, having the same obvious naivety.

Unfortunately, his zeal is not always accompanied by an understanding of the intricacies of the problems that he handles and seeks to solve, and his solutions appear to be facile. The obviousness of his moral constitutes an item to which weakness may be traced. But the grip that these two writers had over the common reader's mind is still there, though somewhat loosened.

Between 1930 and 1935 there appeared two other writers, Yeshwant Gopal Joshi and Vaman Krishna Chorghade, whose work carried forward the development of the inner texture of the short story.

Y. G. Joshi brought a native freshness to the Marathi short story. His school education was cut short at an early stage and his acquaintance with English and English literature was next to nothing. It was an advantage. He was not influenced by foreign writers, creative or critical. He had a penetrating intellect, a keen sense of satire and a sensitiveness both to the comic and the pathetic. His forte was the family and all the various problems and emotional and sentimental relationships that it implies. He professed to despise technique. To him it was something artificial, as indeed it had become in the hands of his contemporaries, something that stood between the reader and the writer. So he sought to develop a way of his own. With the first few opening sentences he would establish a direct and intimate contact with the reader, as in a fire-side chat, and lure him into the story and make him follow the movements and the minds of his character. As he avoided the beaten path in the narration, so he avoided the trite in the language and metaphors he used. His style was poetic and telling but not ornate or affected. In the process of writing he evolved his own technique. He appealed to the domestic feelings and sentiments of the reader in a way few earlier writers had done. But his range was extremely limited and so was his outlook. His satire and his sympathy were reserved for a particular section of society. His manner developed into a mannerism, and in course of time, his strength proved to be his weakness.

Chorghade's stories have an affinity with Diwakar Krishna's. Like Diwakar Krishna, he too is subtly sensitive to the moods of adolescence, to the hopes and despairs, the fears and joys of early youth. There is the same delicacy in the handling of feeling and sentiment. But Chorghade is more alive to the sensuous side of adolescence, to its compelling force, even to its animal urge. His stories have a better finish and structural quality, and his writing is also more varied than Diwakar Krishna's. There is an ethereal fairy-tale-like quality in some of his writings; in some others the feel of raw, warm flesh and blood. As, however, he developed from youth to manhood, took part in political activities, came into contact with Gandhian (*Sarvodaya*) workers and thinkers, he felt he should write with a moral purpose. As this purpose asserted itself the poetry of his writing receded into the background and the story tended to be more like a discourse. For a time there appeared to be a struggle between the poet and the propagandist and ultimately he ceased to be either. He has not written much recently.

For a time after this phase there was a lull, in the sense that the trends established by earlier writers continued to be followed by many others. The bulk of the short story grew but no marked new trends made their appearance. After 1940 we come to a phase which endures to this day. In the work of P. B. Bhave, Gangadhar Gadgil, Arvind Gokhale, Vyankatesh Madgulkar and others, who appeared and developed during this period, the Marathi short story reached new heights and depths. It became less reader-conscious and more aware of its potentialities.

P. B. Bhave puts both colour and vigour in his writing and exposes the working of powerful emotions with a fearlessness which is unique. The sensuous quality of emotional experience is communicated with a compelling force which is almost overpowering. Shri Bhave like Y. G. Joshi is a writer of very strong prejudices. This and his fondness for exuberance in expression often detract from the artistic quality of his writing.

Arvind Gokhale builds his story very conscientiously and carefully. He tries to go to the unconscious urges that deter-

mine and direct conscious behaviour. He has a way of revealing the sorrow and pathos of the common man and woman, which is both skilful and touching. As his sympathy and sensibility are wide and unbiassed, he handles a variety of themes and often experiments with them.

V. Madgulkar writes mainly about villages. His writings stand in bold contrast to the so-called "village stories" of the 30's. The characters in those earlier stories were city-dwellers disguised as villagers. There was a false note in their sentiment and behaviour. It was pseudo-romanticism. Those stories were written under the notion that if you wrote something against a rural background you somehow carried literature to the people and became a people's artist. This kind of writing had acquired a degree of popularity. Madgulkar's writing is quite unlike this. It is genuinely rural. In his stories, which are more like sketches, he reveals the sufferings and sorrows of the village people. Their strength and weakness, their simplicity and cunning, their arrogance and submissiveness, their joys and pastimes, the irony of their life and death, are all to be found in his writings—all in their nakedness. He does not romanticize about them. He does not use an artificially built up vocabulary in writing about them. He has lived with them and he understands them. The social and personal relations of the characters give his stories a pattern of their own. The very frankness and nakedness give his narration a throbbing vitality and the strength of a hammer-stroke.

The writing of Gangadhar Gadgil is a fabric of various and varied strands. Sometimes he writes, or at least he seems to do so, with a childlike simplicity and frankness; at other times with the cynicism of one who has seen through the hollowness of human pretensions, of life itself, at least the present-day, mechanical, machine-ridden, commercialized life; and still others with a note of fantasy reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland*. His stories of the child-mind reveal a keen and unsentimental understanding of children. Their meaningless and purposeless cruelty and kindness, their selfishness, the brutal and the human in them, their view of the adult, all find a place in his writing. So do the follies and foibles, the aspira-

tions and desires, overt and suppressed, of the adult human, the disturbing stormy restlessness hidden beneath the superficial calm and contentment, find a place. Naturally, his stories often function on more than one plane. The individual is both an individual and a man. The life of a few individuals is symbolical of human life itself. The apparent disorder or disjointedness of a story becomes a pattern by itself and becomes symbolical of today's disjointed, unhinged, drifting life. Where a story has this quality, every gesture and action acquires a symbolic significance. The story says something and at the same time implies something more. The obvious and the implied are related to each other, symbolically and actually. This naturally enlarges the context of the story and consequently the range of the reader's awareness.

For writing of this kind language has to be bent and used as it is used in poetry—evocatively. Shri Gadgil's style is very flexible and he shows an originality in the handling of phrases and the use of images. With him direct communication of experience is more important than a description of it. The attempt to do this gives, on occasions, a touch of quaintness to his stories. In other respects too there is a quaintness about them, as if he were looking at the world with a cocked eye.

Gadgil's work has taken the Marathi short story to the furthest point it has so far reached. Whether he will take it further, it is difficult to say. He is only 30 and active. One suspects at times that he is too conscious of his powers and is using them just for the sake of effect. And his work can, at times, be thin, laboured and drawn out.

The above is only an attempt to give a broad survey of the short story in Marathi as it has been and what it is today. It is no history. Mention or omission of names in a survey like this is always an embarrassing problem. I have had to leave out many writers among whom there are some whose work has both quality and substance; some who have acquired a good measure of popularity with their style and themes; and some who have created a sensation for a time, raised controversies and then subsided. I have had to leave out the dis-

cussion of the work of such writers as Shrimati Kamalabai Tilak, Shrimati Muktabai Lele, "Vibhavari Shirurkar," Lakshmanrao Sardesai, etc., from among the earlier group and Prabhakar Padhye, D. B. Mokashi "Shantaram" Sadanand Rege, Mahadev Shastri Joshi, etc., from among the later ones. They have all enriched or are enriching the short story in one way or another. I have also left out a few of the younger writers who hold out a promise for the future but the slenderness of whose output does not warrant an appraisal at this stage. I have had to confine myself to the main trends and to mention only those who, in my view, initiated them. These are the highlights of the Marathi short story. But we must not forget that they are part of a tradition. For one such writer there are 10 more who may be minor writers, but who, nevertheless, give bulk to the output and substance and stability to the trends.

The incongruous and humorous in human nature, behaviour and situation have also found a place in the Marathi short story and there has been a long line of humorous writers. In the 20's of this century, there began to appear the writings of R. V. Joshi and P. K. Atre, which have delighted many. In the late 20's V. V. Bokil brought something to the Marathi short story it had not known before. He blew a breeze of light humour into his stories, which was very refreshing and became very popular. The pointed and pungent writings of Shamrao Oka have left a deep mark in this field. Among current writers, P. L. Deshpande with his wide experience and versatility is brilliantly carrying on the tradition. Gangadhar Gadgil, too, sometimes writes in a purely humorous vein.

Mention must be made here of the part played by magazines in the development of the short story. The short story as a form depends entirely on magazines for its growth and development. Mention has already been made of *Manoranjan* in this connection. It played an important part in fostering the Marathi short story. Others like *Karmanuk*, *Udyan* and *Madhukar* encouraged it also. Later in the 20's and early 30's *Ratnakar* and *Yeshwant* carried on the tradition. In the 30's and 40's there appeared a number of magazine devoted to

the study and criticism of literature and literary forms. *Pratibha* (fortnightly), *Parijat*, *Jyotsna*, *Samceekshak*, *Sahitya*, *Vageeshwari*, *Abhiruchi*, *Satyakatha*, *Yugawani* and others did a great deal to discover and encourage new talent in literature. They contributed considerably to the development of literary criticism, and in general, helped to raise the standard of taste and writing. Unfortunately many of them have had a short life. Some like *Satyakatha* and *Yugawani* are still there, but the general dearth of literary journals and reviews is very keenly felt by all lovers of literature. The work done by the annual issues, especially the Diwali issues of such weeklies as *Sanjeevani*, *Dhanurdhari*, *Mauj*, *Navayug* and of other magazines, is also considerable. Much of the best work of many writers has appeared, and still appears, in these annual numbers.

A word about the influence of stories of other languages on the Marathi story would not be out of place. Since much of our modern literature is inspired by and modelled after English literature in particular and other Continental literature (through its translation into English) in general, the short story is no exception. Translations or adaptations (adaptations more than translations) from English have all along had a free entry into the field of the Marathi story. Stories from Bengali, Hindi and Urdu have also been translated into Marathi. English models have naturally had a longer influence on the shaping of the Marathi short story.

More recently, works of contemporary writers like Saroyan, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Caldwell, Dorothy Parker and others have had a certain vogue in reading circles. Although translations and adaptations still make their appearance in our magazines, no serious writer of the short story today looks upon the writers of the West, or those in other Indian languages, as models to imitate. He may study their works as one artist does that of another. He is interested in seeing how other writers handle their material, how the short story develops in their hands. And he naturally benefits by it. But so far as his own work is concerned he looks within and around himself

and tries to do his best. This is the dominant attitude today and this is where the Marathi short story stands.

THE ORIYA SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI NABAKISHORE DAS

The short story is not a modern innovation in Orissa nor has it been borrowed from the West. We have been used to hearing innumerable interesting short stories in our festivals and social functions. Our women narrate charming stories, full of romance and adventure to our children. Some of these stories, collected and published by the late Shri Gopal Chandra Praharaj and others, in book form, are known as "*Utkal Kahani*." Considered from the point of view of technique and style, no art critic can totally reject them from the category of the short story. We find in them the expression of many deep experiences of the human heart and of feelings and sentiments like love, frustration, affliction, courage, etc. Vivid pictures of contemporary life are presented in these short stories known as "*Rajaghar Kahani*." In *Boula Adhya* we see the philosophy of truth and non-violence.

In these stories the characters are usually the sons of the kings, ministers, merchants and police officers. They describe the courageousness, the travels and romances of these heroes. But besides these "*Rajaghar Kahanis*" we also have many stories relating to the common man, in which various aspects of his life are depicted.

Oriya folk stories are charming, rich in imagination and elegant in style. Some of them have also been written in poetry. Critics may have different opinions about classing these verse stories as short stories. Nevertheless, we cannot forget their claim when discussing the evolution and development of the short story in Oriya. Story-tellers have popularized these stories by developing a popular style of their own. Some of

the modern story writers are gradually emulating this old style.

Besides this category, we have stories translated from Sanskrit. In the 17th century we find the story book *Batrish Sinhasuna* by Siva Das. Its theme is well known, and it is a good example of the prose and the style of story writing of that age.

Chatur Binod by Brajanath Badajena is a fine example of the 18th century tale. Brajanath, who had the eye of an artist and the pen of a critic, depicted the psychology of women and satirized the evils and bad customs prevalent in the age. His book *Chatur Binod* is divided into four stories—"Hassya Binod," "Rasa Binod," "Nitec Binod" and "Priti Binod."

In the 19th century there was an attempt at writing short stories but it did not gain much importance. But towards the later part of the 19th century there was Fakirmohan, the father of modern Oriya short stories and novels. Fakirmohan had not much of education along Western lines but he had an intimate knowledge of human life. He had both the power of observation and the pen to depict the real life of Oriya peasants. His stories became popular at once and he achieved immortality through his pen. All his short stories have been published in a series called *Galpa Swalpa*. Fakirmohan depicted the life of the poor, neglected cultivators and tenants of Orissa, leaving aside the life of *rajas* and *ranis*.

The basic idea of his short stories was to change the contemporary social order. Social values are evident in his stories. His first story *Lachchama* was a historical romance depicting the life of an unfortunate girl at the time of the fall of the Marathas. His "*Rebatce*," "*Randapua Ananta*," "*Beerei Biswal*" and "*Patent Medicine*" are all master stories. His "*Kalika Prasad Gorap*" gives the picture of the sea trade of Balasore. He affected no cynicism, he was optimistic and he believed in life. His humour was biting but the language was simple and colloquial.

After Fakirmohan, many writers attempted to write short stories. Lakshmikanta and Kuntalakumari Sabat are the best

known. Lakshmikanta was a favourite of his time for his humour, romance and chaste style. Kuntalakumari was an ambitious Oriya woman writer and her stories, which belong to the *Mukur* group, were also popular. *Mukur* was an Oriya journal of that period.

Gradually story-writing became more and more popular. The *Barunce* group was formed, consisting of those who contributed stories to the magazine *Barunce*. "Art for Art's sake" was their guiding principle. The main characteristics of the *Barunce* group were an ornamental language, accurate description of nature, love and adventure. They were all romantics. Lakshmikanta joined this group with Upendra Kishore and Baishnab Charan.

Barunce brought a new awakening in Oriya literature but it had a short life. It was followed by the *Sabuja* group. Many highly educated young men including Kalindi Charan, Harishchandra and Satchi Routrai were prominent writers of this group. Kalindi Charan is a romantic. His style is simple. His two famous stories are *Mansara Bilap* (The Cry of the Flesh) and *Pangu* (The Cripple). In *Mansara Bilap*, we see the love of the dog Zulu for Dora, a pet deer. The *zamindar* allowed this deer to be killed for a *sahab's* dinner and the dog pines for it and leaves home. In *Pangu* also we find that a cripple sacrifices his life to save that of a bird floating in the current; he jumps into the current to save the bird, but loses his own life, forgetting for the moment that he is a cripple.

The writers of this group were familiar with other literatures of the world and were anxious to develop their own. The main force of their writing lay in psychoanalysis, romance and the solicitude to remodel society.

The youngest writer of this group is Satchi Routrai. Satchi Routrai, though a Marxist in poetry, is a realistic short story writer. Two of his collections are *Mashaneer Fula* (The Flower of the Cremation Ground) and *Matir Taj*. In his *Jagutiharee*, a man, who is greedy and will not even carry a dead body without money, is conquered by the beauty of a dead woman.

Satchi Routrai is an expert in giving vivid sketches of Oriya life.

There are certain independent short story writers, of these Bankanidhi Pattnayak and Godavarish Mahapatra deserve special mention. Godavarish Mahapatra is a powerful writer and his *Ebmadhya Banchichi* (Still, I Live) is a good collection of short stories. It speaks of the great famine that took place in Orissa when Gopabandhu Das, the popular leader of Orissa, was trying to help the masses. He paints vivid pictures of the worries, unhappiness, poverty, humiliation and oppression of villagers. He depicts the rural man. "*Maguncer Sagada*" describes how a poor carter of Orissa suffers due to the advent of the motor bus. He has viewed the present government and social order very critically.

Many of our older writers have stopped writing short stories. Young writers have taken their place and have faced the reality of the world. Some of them began writing before World War II. The modern world with its conflicts and complex problems has influenced story writers. Stories, instead of becoming mere pictures of life, have also become problematic. Vivid pictures of the life of the neglected aborigines of Orissa are given in novels and stories. Gopinath Mohanty's name may be specially mentioned here. His "*Pimpudi*" (Ant), "*Sikar*," "*Itihus*" and "*Arohan*" are all good short stories. His "*Ghasar Fula*" (Flower of Grass) shows his unique talent in this direction. He is satirical and has a simple style. But he is a cynic, he laughs at us and diminishes us in our eyes. There are many other writers amongst whom Ananta Prasad Panda, Kaliprasanna Kabi, Rajkishore Ray, Rajkishore Pattnayak, Nityananda Mohapatra, Surendra Mohanty and Lakshminarayan Bramhananda deserve our attention.

Ananta Prasad has written many short stories, most of which were published in different magazines in Orissa. His *Savayatar Tale*, *Manar Bhuta* and *Prakrutee* show us simple folk with their economic problems and the impact of modern civilization on their life. Rajkishore Pattnayak, another powerful story writer, deals specially with women and their behaviour.

Surendra Mohanty's *Krushnachuda* is of another variety. Gopinath Mohanty views present society satirically while Surendra Mohanty has started writing with a doubting mind. Cynicism is the predominant note of his stories. At times he goes back to the past in order to escape from the acute reality of the present. His stories are introspective and problematic. The pang of poverty felt by the present middle-class society has created a tone of resentment in his stories. His mind has been worried by the restlessness of the unemployed educated masses, the inequality in our present society and the oppression of the landlords and the rich. He is very keen on finding solutions to these problems but at the same time is not sure of the way. His stories, "*Vagabond*," "*Manis O Arthinitec*," "*Khrushnachuda*" and others, reveal this characteristic.

The new age does not have one ideal, for life is not of only one pattern. Some writers are romantics but most of them are realists and present life as it is, faithfully, without caring for the favour or frown of society's guardians. Realism is the guiding force; love and romance occasionally flash like lightning amidst clouds. Modern writers are not solving all of life's problems but they do not fear to raise them. The mass education, industrialization and urbanization of Orissa demand more short stories; and our people, who have a long tradition of hearing them, will enjoy reading them. There is a great future for short-story writers in years to come.

THE PANJABI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI SURRENDER SINGH NARULA

The Panjabi short story is the most fruitful branch of modern Panjabi literature, which, I must confess at the outset, seems to be passing through a most uninspiring and impoverished phase. When we talk of modern literature written in the leading provincial languages of India other than Panjabi, we are conscious of certain trends that have enabled the modern

Indian writer to effect a definite break with the past. In the case of Panjabi literature, however, it is difficult to proceed on such an assumption for a number of reasons. Mainly owing to the controversy over the script, and the insistence of a powerful section of Panjabi writers on the exclusive use of the Gurumukhi script, a greater part of modern Panjabi literature in its earlier period was the work of writers who believed in Sikhism. Their work, consequently, was often coloured by their religious outlook, which sometimes bordered on communalism.

There are some historical causes which have led the modern writer in other Indian languages to scale new heights, to explore new avenues of thought and to broaden his mental horizon. Even a summary knowledge of modern Bengali, Marathi, Hindi and South Indian literatures will prove the truth of my statement. An average Panjabi writer of the modern period, however, has stuck hard to certain literary traditions and forms of expression which have been the stock-in-trade of generations of writers in the past. For this reason, modern Panjabi literature, particularly in its early period, for all its clarity of style, perfection of form and subtlety of thought, has seldom been "progressive" or "modern" in its outlook. Therefore, when I talk of Panjabi literature in modern times, I feel shy of introducing it to those who are conversant with modern literature in other Indian languages. To them the "modern" of Panjabi literature will appear mediæval and outdated. There is, however, no cause for despair. The unrelieved darkness is fast subsiding and gleams of a new dawn are visible. Panjabi literature is no longer confined to the works of sectarian writers, and a group of young writers is boldly opposing the old-fashioned literary pandits. We have entered on a phase in literature which reflects the dawn of a renaissance.

The revival of letters in our language is proceeding at such a rapid pace that some modern writers have not only outdistanced contemporary writers belonging to the orthodox school, but the originality of thought and the boldness of style displayed by them entitle them to a place with the best

of contemporary authors in other Indian languages. True, their number is limited, but these few are undoubtedly masters of their art.

The modern period in Panjabi literature may be said to begin with the year 1860 A.D. The Indian Mutiny had ended and the Panjabi was settling down to a peaceful life. The political horizon was clear of clouds, and the upper classes thought that they could comfortably bask in the sunshine of *pax Britannica*. Panjabi writers took to the translation of the Sanskrit classics and, confining themselves to their ivory towers, revived the old romantic tales. The traditional forms of expression like the *si-hazārī*, the *bara-mah*, the *doha* and the *baint* were used. The rigidity of the poetic form prevented the growth of original thought. Accordingly, men of letters sang of romantic heroes and no break with the past was effected. Later on, however, Professor Puran Singh (1881-1931) made a bold experiment in *Khule Maidan*, when he adapted Qadar Yar's *Puran Bhugat*. The introduction of the printing press and the establishment of newspapers opened new vistas of hope, but the shadow of a revival of religious fanaticism hung like the sword of Damocles. The growth of the Namdhari movement in its later phases and the propagation of religious ideals by the Ahmedias, the Arya Samajists and the Singh Sabhais imparted a deeply religious tint to our literature which, with the passage of time, became narrow and sectarian.

Writers appeared to be possessed with a desire to preach for or against certain social customs and practices; and to paint in vivid colours the clash between Muslims and Sikhs in the past and between Sikhs and non-Sikhs in their own time.

Bhai Vir Singh (1872), in *Subhagji* and *Raja Lakhdatta Singh*, delineated the moral conversion of the depraved Sikh society of the day to an ideal Sikhism. Charan Singh did the same in his novels. Amongst non-Sikh writers, Brij Lal Shastri tried to revive the old Sanatanist ideals of Hinduism, while Bhai Kahn Singh compiled an encyclopædia of the Sikh religion.

A few writers aspired to revive the old romantic tales,

and undoubtedly achieved "the long reaches of the peaks of song," but they failed to notice the tragedy of the times in the aching stoop of the Panjabi peasant and the maladministration that followed British occupation. They never became conscious of the betrayal of the plundered, humiliated and disinherited Panjabi people. They made no attempt to interpret the old romantic tales in new terms. Professor Puran Singh was the only exception. As many rewriters of the romantic tales were lacking in erudition and were not possessed of a massive intellect, they repeated *ad verbum* the main incidents of the romantic tales. They aped the great masters of the past without achieving their lyrical intensity or their level of thought. As many as 14 prominent authors wrote *Kissa Hir Ranjha*, the most important amongst them being Bhagwan Singh, Jog Singh, Kishan Singh, Lohara Singh Roshan and Maula Bux.

The Mohammedan writers of Panjabi were, in the meantime, also concentrating on their sectarian literature. Ali Mohammed Sadiq and Zakin wrote *Jang Namas*, being an account of the exploits of various religious leaders. They usually employed the Persian script, which was not accepted by the majority of people. Thus we find that towards the middle of the second decade of the present century, Panjabi literature had fallen on evil days.

The homecoming of some members of the Gadar party from America, and the rising generation belonging to the liberal professions and deriving its inspiration from the West, has rejuvenated our literature. It is significant to note in this respect that a revolt against past traditions and sectarianism is most prominent amongst the writers of the Panjabi short story, although in the realm of poetry Professor Mohan Singh of Panj Darya, Pritam Singh "Safir" and Amrita Pritam have revolted also. Such Panjabi dramatists as Balwant Gargi and Harcharan Singh have done notable work in bringing Panjabi literature in line with Western standards. Principal Teja Singh, by his literary essays, has set a new standard which can compare favourably with the best in Indian literature. Dr. Mohan Singh with the aid of a massive intellect and a

scintillating prose style has done wonderful work in establishing new standards of literary criticism. It is, however, in the realm of the short story that the number of writers is the largest and the standards achieved are the highest.

The Panjabi short story is not very old. It began in the 30's of the present century and some translations from Bengali short stories as well as translations of Russian short stories were the first to appear. At present, Indian writers are very well acquainted with the technique and exposition of the art practised by Western authors. The most prominent names in the realm of the Panjabi short story are Dr. Mohan Singh, Professor Sant Singh Sekhon, Kartar Singh Duggal, Kalwant Singh Virk, Sujan Singh, Navtej, Gurbux Singh, Balwant Gargi and Mohindar Singh Sarna. I am omitting any mention of my own contributions since I have two short collections of short stories to my credit but my main contribution is in the realm of novels.

Of these writers the four most important are M.A.s in English while Professor Sant Singh Sekhon, the best among them, began writing short stories in the English medium. In the early 30's of the present century, Sekhon published a few short stories in some foreign magazines. These won him a great name, and some of the foreign reviewers compared him favourably with the best French and English short-story writers. Through the successful persuasion of Professor Mohan Singh, the poet, who was at that time editing the monthly, *Likhari*, Sekhon wrote some short stories in Panjabi. Since then his short stories have served as models for younger writers and through his frank and dispassionate criticism he has helped many a young writer to perfect his art and overcome his shortcomings. Sekhon has published two collections of short stories, *Samachar* and *Kame te Yodhc*. The short stories contained in his first collection have a classic form and his exposition of the themes chosen is both artistic and elegant. He has been teaching English in various colleges in the Panjab since the 20's of the present century and his long acquaintance with the principles of Western literary criticism has helped him in perfecting a form of literature so dear to him.

His short stories "*Bhatta*" (The Breakfast), "*Pemi-De-Nyane*" (Pemi's Children) and "*Wawarola*" (The Cyclone), all have a unity of impression which emerges spontaneously out of the artistic presentation of the theme. It is usual with him to choose an insignificant incident from the life of an individual character and to build a pattern of social life around that incident, indicative of a vast social background. Sometimes he makes his characters fight fearlessly for a cause or an ideal with the courage of ancient epic heroes. "*Patal-da-Banda*" (The Man from the Underworld) is a case in point. He is, however, more successful in those short stories in which he builds up a character by deft, appropriate touches. By a clever use of a significant word or an apt figure of speech, he gives us the silhouette of a great figure looming large on the horizon. An illustration of this is contained in his short story, "*Sham Lal Vedanti*."

The stories of the second collection, *Kame to Yodhc*, are notable for their intellectual content. He endeavours to throw a single feature or a crisis into strong relief and achieves stupendous effects by posing it against a background of subdued tints. He has a highly individual style and can hold his readers by the vivid word-pictures he paints. He makes every word tell, because every word adds something to the impression made on the reader. He does not, however, practise a rigid economy in the use of words, and never allows the search for the right word to impair his freedom of expression or thought. The most prominent story in the second collection is "*Atom Bomb Virudh*" (Against the Atom Bomb) and it depicts the just fears of the average citizen regarding the imminent tragedy which mankind is facing today.

The characters in Kartar Singh Duggal's short stories are the important factor. He can give life and actuality to his characters with an ease born out of his mastery of the technique of the short story. He does not allow them to take shape as the narrative proceeds but visualizes his characters and their actions before he starts so that every tiny word and gesture helps to build up a complete picture before the reader's eyes. He has the ability to sketch his characters in a few bold,

decisive strokes, allowing the action and dialogue to do the rest. Having the ability to choose the really salient points and to emphasize them, he defines sharply the contrast between light and shade and every new touch adds something to the understanding of the whole. Duggal is our most prolific writer in the realm of the short story, having over 100 to his credit. These have appeared in Hindi and Urdu and have won him wide recognition. His short stories about the division of the Panjab have an under current of optimism and he has always stood for human values, which were thrown overboard at the time of the partition of our country. "*Nawan-Ghar*" (The New Home) and "*Us Dian Churian*" (Her Bangles) are two stories which illustrate his abiding faith in the essential goodness of man.

Kulwant Singh Virk is one of our few younger writers who has won early recognition. The most characteristic feature of his stories is the village background. His presentation of detail in his short stories is apt and artistic. He moves, as it were, from one stepping stone to another—quickly and deftly—bridging the momentary hiatus in the reader's mind by the speed with which he carries his theme forward. Depending on suggestion and implication rather than statement he leaves much to the reader's power of comprehension. His short stories "*Chacha*" (Uncle) and "*Ujar*" (Wilderness) are examples of his mastery of the technique of the short story. In both these stories he introduces a good deal of detail but his detail is carefully chosen, not selected for its own sake but for the sake of the story. Dialogue is used with admirable effect, used to advance the plot. Chacha's conversation with the villagers greatly helps in the revelation of his character.

Mohinder Singh Sarna, another great short-story writer, also makes clever use of detail and dialogue in his short stories. In the two collections of his short stories, entitled *Pathar ne Admi* (The Man and the Stone) and *Shagna Bhari-Sawer* (The Auspicious Morning), he works in intricate patterns of elaborate design and a subtle presentation of human psychology. This tendency to elaborate sometimes throws the work out of balance.

Sujan Singh's short stories are notable for the compactness of their plots. He goes directly to his theme. He begins his story at the critical point where action starts and where a few lines of dialogue or description enable the reader to be fully conscious of the situation. He can be aptly described as a master in the art of setting the scene. His short story "*Ras-Lila*" illustrates this assertion.

Gurbux Singh, the editor of the popular monthly, *Preet Lari*, has now switched over from literature to journalism. His earlier short stories, however, have a freshness of their own together with a highly individual style, which have endeared them to thousands of Panjabis. Compared to other short-story writers in Panjabi, Gurbux Singh uses dialogue sparingly and carries his reader along by the sheer buoyancy of his spirit and imagination. He holds his readers by the vivid pictures he paints. Meticulously careful in the choice of his words, he manages to avoid the impression of possessing a stilted or laboured style. His prose, on the contrary, is elegant and rhythmic, based upon an interesting pattern in the structure of the sentences. Among his best known works are the collections of short stories entitled *Anokhe to Ikalle* (Unique and Individual) and *Bhabi Maina*.

Dr. Mohan Singh's short stories reflect the experiences of a lifetime and are based upon personal observations which are the outcome of a deep understanding of life. His style is highly individual and there is a crispness about his phrases which is captivating and charming. Gyani Gurmukh Singh Musafir has also published a few collections of short stories. These have a wide appeal as they deal mainly with the main incidents of his personal life and his participation in the struggle for liberation from British rule. Devindar Satyarthi rarely writes in Panjabi these days although he originally began as a short-story writer and a collector of Panjabi folk songs.

Of the younger writers Navtej is the most prominent. But he has a strong political bias and that has affected the artistic quality of his outlook to a great extent.

I have given a brief account of the successful short story writers of the Panjab, but I must confess that a large number of writers belonging to the younger generation have not sufficiently realized the importance of the short story as a literary form. The short stories written by young writers like Lochan Bakhshi, Devindar, Balbir Singh and Sawindar Singh Uppal are just passable, written without any regard for form or technique or even proportion. I do not mean to say that the masters of the short stories in Panjabi are tied down by any technical formulas. They know how to conceal their art; their technique is scarcely perceptible. The younger generation of the Panjabi short-story writers have ignored the fact that in writing a short story one is subject to definite limitations; plot, character, description and many other elements must conform to the smaller canvas of the short story. On the contrary they introduce a great many secondary characters and a great deal of dialogue, which has no bearing directly on the plot or the interpretation of the characters. They should learn from the work of the masters, know how to begin a story and how to close it with an air of finality. The conclusion of their stories is usually reminiscent of the whole, not insistently so, but recalling almost subconsciously to the reader's mind the atmosphere of the whole story.

I have every hope that in the years to come the Panjabi short story will achieve a place of pride in the literatures of modern Indian languages.

THE SANSKRIT SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI Y. MAHALINGA SASTRI

The greatest problem of life is its dissolution in death. Men of all ages and climes, being condemned to this single destiny, have from time immemorial racked their brains with questions of mortality and immortality. The speculations of men on this profound subject have not only illuminated the field of philosophy, but have been embodied in literary forms

including the short story. The ancient seers of India who propounded their solutions to the eternally challenging problems of life in the Upanishads, have given us at the very source of literature a great short story. This, the *Kathopanishad*, describes the passing of Nachiketas from his father's presence to the abode of Yama and his return to his father with the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit which Yama vouchsafed to him.

But the philosophical discourse of the Upanishad must be distinguished from the æsthetic presentation of truths. For, though science and art deal with the same subjects, they adopt different methods. Sanskrit writers have accepted a threefold classification of the methods of expounding truths. The third is the æsthetic method, which charms while it teaches and is called *Kanta Samitopadesh*.

Prose narratives are found not only in the Upanishads but also in larger numbers in the Brahmanas. The *Aitareya Brahmana* narrates how Harishchandra, who had a son as a gift from Varuna, evaded the fulfilment of his promise to offer the son as a sacrifice to Varuna himself.

The Brahmanas narrate stories to glorify sacrifice. There is a great distance from the Vedic age to the age of classical literature. During the early days of the short story, it was suffused with the excitement of wonder. Imagination ran riot. The canvas was peopled with angels and demons, *siddhas* and *vidyadharas*, necromancers and black magicians. The action derived its heightened effects from a background depicted with romantic extravagance. Human life was, as it were, shown projected on a gigantic scale and flushed with gorgeous colour schemes. Stories of this type were mostly of popular origin. They were fairy tales and other fantastic fabrications of the people's imagination filled with horror, awe and wonder. Poetic justice always sweetened the *dénouement*, but otherwise the stories were not inlaid with any deducible moral.

The *Brihat Katha* was the people's book of romantic tales. It was written in prose, but the language was the Pai-

sachi Prakrit, a dialect close to classical Sanskrit. Its author, Gunadhya, is believed to have lived about the beginning of the Christian era. The Sanskrit translation by Somadeva, *Katha Sarit Sagara*, by which alone it is widely known, is in poetry. It is veritably an ocean of stories, and next to the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* the most highly esteemed national book of India and a source book for poets and dramatists of subsequent ages. Stories of wonder predominate in the *Brihat Katha* and perhaps Dandin meant to say this when he described it as "*Bhuta-bhashamayī prahurachdutar-tham brihat-katham*."

The *Vetala Pancha Vimsati* is only a cycle reeled off from the *Brihat Katha*. The *Suka Saptati*, which is reminiscent of the *Arabian Nights*, also belongs to this type.

The mist of childlike wonder was gradually pierced by the clear incisive rays of thought. Probability came to be regarded as the sap of the story and vigour came to be imparted to it through a conscious aiming at realism. Then the story began to carry a moral with pride and seemed to live for its burden. It was thus still a long way away from the stage of being a purely æsthetic entity reflective of truth in many forms. Stories with a didactic purpose or, for that matter, any kind of purpose were the improvisations of the teachers, the learned class who aimed at the instruction or edification of the masses.

At the head of the stories written for instruction stands the *Panchatantra*. It is likely that it was inspired by the *Jataka* stories of the Buddhists. How the *Panchatantra* has become a world classic need not be dwelt upon in this review.

Apart from fables innumerable tales written for the instruction and edification of the masses appeared in Puranic literature. In imaginative and descriptive power, in the shrewd delineation of human motives, in the contrivance of arresting situations and in the glow of poetic cadences the Puranic *Upakhyans* have appropriated to themselves a distinct grade of literary eminence. But having in their view the *Surhit Sammitopadesh*, they were all stories which aimed at being in-

structive. The Puranas aimed at the instruction of the masses in the principles and truths of religion, in national ideals and in all matters relating to right conduct and ethical living.

The Puranic period extended over several centuries and did not come to an end with the compilations of the 18 Puranas and the 18 Upa Puranas. The *Sthala Mahatmyas* continued their mission over many more centuries. Later, there came into existence the *Tithi* and *Tirtha Mahatmyas* also. The *Skanda Purana* went on increasing its folios pile on pile. These later compilations glorified holy places, shrines, ablutions, gifts, worship, fasting, *vratas* and rituals by means of cleverly designed stories, and it must be said to their credit that they are remarkable for their skill in invention, structure and vivid presentation.

In classical literature, too, some of the poets imitated the Puranic method and wrote stories for instruction. The poet Kohemandra of Kashmir, who bore the title of *Vyasadasa*, was a writer with a distinctly modern trend and excelled in satiric portrayals of the vices and the degeneracy of contemporary society. He invented stories to illustrate his types. He made certain professions the butt of his piercing ridicule and wove into his effusions suitable illustrative stories. He dealt with pride in a separate poem and interspersed it with a number of stories illustrating the futility of pride, whether of birth, beauty, wealth or learning.

The emergence of the story as a perfect literary form, wholly æsthetic in spirit, was coeval with its final stage of maturity and then it passed from the hands of the pedants into the hands of the poets.

But the Sanskrit poets who, without caring to teach, attempted to entertain the reader by their stories were few and far between. And such stories have remained very obscure too in Sanskrit literary history because of the conventional furore with which the *Mahakavyas* were hailed. Story poems of short length, which could be read at one sitting, appeared in the literary firmament as swallows before summer. They were not more than half a dozen. Narayana Bhattapada of

Malabar has given us *Swaha-Sudhakar* and *Koti-viraha*. This poet flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries. His son Krishna Kavi wrote *Tara-shashanka*. Madhava's *Danalila Kavya* of about the same period is a fine specimen of the same type. The *Bilhana Charitra* of Bilhana, who flourished in the 11th century, has affinity with this species of narrative literature. Utpreksha Vallabha's *Bhikshatana Kavya*, which was written in the 16th century, can also be included in this category in spite of its great length. These poems depict love as a passion which is insistent and compelling, and are distinguished for their rich descriptions. In our own time Mahakavi Sunderesa Sarma of Tanjore has produced the *Nalini Charitam*, which is worthy of being mentioned in this connection. His *Sandais-chara Garva Bhanga* is of another complexion, not being erotic, but abounding in humour. In both of them Shri Sarma shows a large measure of inventive skill in the construction of the tale.

Stories of daring and adventure, of heroic deeds and brazen villainy, of love, of romances and lofty friendship, were put together with a kind of basic unity by Dandin in the *Dasa-kumara Charitra*, and what is more, were written in fine Sanskrit prose. If only later writers had had the good taste to take Dandin as their model and had chastened their prose style into a delicate and dexterous vehicle of thought, Sanskrit would have been rich in valuable prose writings, as it is in poetical masterpieces. Unfortunately, however, a perverted taste led writers to take Bana as their model and caused them to lose themselves in a wilderness of high-sounding bombastic phrases, by means of which they could not achieve anything creditable or worth while.

It is interesting to note that the main elements of the short story were nurtured in a soil which could not be suspected of having anything remotely to do with it. Among the *Dasa Rupakas*, the *Bhana* is unique in many ways. It is a play with one character only. The narration of incident and expression of feelings are embodied in soliloquies and varied by fictitious dialogues. The duration of time in the play is comparatively short, not exceeding at the most 24 hours. The unity of place is

imperative in the very nature of the play. Unity of action follows as a corollary. A gallant appears on the stage in eager pursuit of romance. He pours forth reminiscences of his amours in cascades of verse. The progress of his mission is assisted by a number of imaginary contacts and fictitious dialogues. The coming of evening marks the triumph of his romance. In this piece of literature we have minute studies of a variety of very interesting characters, who constitute a replica of real life, descriptions of comic situations and a light-hearted abandon alternating with considerable emotional stress. The episodes in the *Bhanas* are narrated in a prose style which is natural and free, vivacious and charming. The structure of Kasipati's *Mukundananda*, Shri Ramabhadra Dikshita's *Sringara Tilaka*, and other hundreds found in this *genre* provided scope for forging a literary prose style remarkable for its vigour and precision, a scope which the other types of the *Rupakas* could not allow on account of the multiplicity of the characters with which they were littered, who carried on dialogues in short and staccato sentences. These *Bhanas* laid the foundation for the development of the novel and the short story in Sanskrit. But before the harvest could be gathered in, a frosty wind began to blow from the West, which stripped bare the luxuriant fields and, when it passed, left them bare and desolate. The devastation, however, was a signal for regeneration, and in renascent India, Sanskrit shows every sign of re-emerging with a vigour born of her facility for assimilating the best in foreign literatures and attaining to a magnitude and grandeur undreamt of even during the most palmy days of her past.

The short story in the other languages of the world has flourished with the spread of journalism. But journalistic ventures in Sanskrit in modern India have been feeble and have often proved short-lived. Occasionally, one finds attempts at short-story writing in these papers. In the *Manjusha*, a Calcutta Sanskrit monthly, Pandita Kshama Rao wrote a few stories, employing unaffected simple prose; and attempts were also made to translate into Sanskrit short stories from Bengali literature. Years ago I wrote a short story entitled

"*Kali-pradurbhava*" in the *Udyana Patrika* of Tiruvayyaru but later on I dramatized the theme recognizing the isolation it had to suffer because of the literary form I had adopted.

Sanskrit has never been a dead language as far as literature is concerned, though it has not been spoken for some time. From the Vedic seers down to our own times there has never been any break in the line of her poets though devotees and admirers of Sanskrit and her constituted guardians have, unfortunately, failed to feel the still beating pulse.

Sanskrit is sufficiently alive today to manifest rejuvenation through the intensely active process of eliminating unnecessary matter and assimilating those nourishing elements drawn from the fusion of cultures which at the present day hold promise of a world-wide renaissance. And the development of the short story in Sanskrit, at a pace commensurate with the advance made by it in other languages, will not prove to be a fond and fantastic hope if our people, led and guided by the State, pledge themselves to discover her throbbing life and foster it with tender solicitude.

THE SINDHI SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSOR M. U. MALKANI

Although the origin of Sindhi poetry can be traced back to the 16th century, Sindhi prose, including the short story, is barely a century old. This is due to the curious fact that for centuries the Sindhi language possessed no adequate alphabet and script in which to express its peculiar indigenous sounds like *jj*, *bb*, *dd* and *gg* and others taken from the Arabic like *kh*, *zh*, *ggh* and *ph*. It was the British rulers who framed its Arabic alphabet of 52 letters in 1853, ten years after their ethically dubious conquest of Sindh. So, while poetry and folklore were orally preserved, being handed down from generation to generation, there was no means of preserving prose without an appropriate alphabet.

Sindhi being one of the modern principal Prakrits derived from Sanskrit, it was originally written in the Devanagari script in the early days of the Hindu rulers. No literary work of that period, however, either in prose or in poetry, has been preserved. In the ten and a half centuries of Muslim rule (800-1843), Sindhi was written in an inadequate Arabic script, in which some of its poetry was originally recorded; but the prose written in this period is found to be purely of a theological nature having no literary importance. So after our migration to India, Sindhi literary prose began to be written only after the introduction by the British of the systematic Arabic script, in 1853. Incidentally it might be mentioned that exactly a century later the original Devanagari script was revived and both scripts have been sanctioned by the government.

The very first Sindhi short story was a folk-tale, entitled "*Rai Dyach and Serath*," published in 1849 as an appendix to a Sindhi grammar compiled by Captain Stack, a great Sindhi scholar. But this story by an unknown author, written in a style which has a quaint old-world flavour, is an exception; it was printed in the Devanagari script, for the new Arabic script had not yet been introduced. Then, between 1864 and 1871, Kewalram Salamatrai brought out his two famous volumes of didactic anecdotes using the Arabic script. The titles of these works are *A Gift* and *Flowers*, translated into English. Like most of the works mentioned in this paper they are couched in an idiom which exemplifies the charm of classical prose. In 1870, Udhamram Thanwardas published a translation of *Aesop's Fables*; and in 1890, Mirza Kalichbeg, our most voluminous writer in all branches of literature, brought out his translation of *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare*. Dewan Kauromal, another pioneer of Sindhi prose, brought out a collection entitled *Stories for Children*, in the same year. In 1894 Sobhraj Daswani translated from the Persian a fine book of moral stories called *The Adornment of the Assembly*; while an unknown writer published a charming book of romantic fairy tales called *Entertainment for Leisure Hours*.

Eighteen years later Parmanand Mewaram, a master of

chaste prose, published *Dil Bahar*, a storehouse of highly humorous stories and anecdotes selected from his famous *Jote*, the oldest literary journal in Sindh, which appeared without break for 40 years. At this time Parmanand also wrote "*Is Dowry more Important than Virtue?*," a moving story about a burning problem of the day. About this time Kauromal came under the influence of the literary and social renaissance in Bengal, and ably translated some of Bankim Chandra Chatterji's famous stories, "*Indira*," "*Radharani*" and "*Two Rings*," as well as condensed Shrimati Ghoshal's novel *Fatal Garland* into a short story.

Surveying this first phase of the development of the Sindhi short story, it will be observed that most of the tales had moral or romantic themes and laid special stress on entertainment and instruction. But towards the end of this period a distinct tendency to deal with topics likely to bring about social reform can be noticed.

The next phase in the development of the Sindhi story began in 1914 with the inauguration of the Sindhi Sahit Society by Jethumal Parsram and Lalchand Jagtiani, a fellow member of the P.E.N. and a master of Sindhi prose. Founded when social and economic problems were thickening all over the world, the monthly magazine of this society, which continued publication for about 15 years, was a milestone in the growth of Sindhi stories devoted to domestic and social themes. Lalchand himself wrote, in his highly idiomatic style, the first original stories: "*Sorrows of Kishni*" and "*A Life of Suffering*." Bherumal Mahirchand, another master of modern prose, wrote a moralistic story, "*The Greatness of Love*." Lalchand also wrote a historical story on the famous "*Hurs of Sind*"; and Nirmaldas Fatehchand, a great Persian scholar, wrote another historical story, "*Sarojini*," which dealt with the Hindu-Muslim unity in old Sind. In 1920 Assanand Mamtora, another P.E.N. member, translated Shrimati Ghoshal's "*Rebellion*," and then wrote an original story on spiritual love called "*The Philosopher*." Tagore's "*Hungry Stones*" and "*Kabuliwalla*" were respectively translated by Atmaram and Girdhari Kirpalani. Six years later Tagore's "*Sudha*" was translated by the present

writer along with Shrimati Ghoshal's "*Spirit of the Forest*" and were later published by Jethumal, the greatest Sindhi journalist of the day, in the weekly *Bharatvasi*.

Around 1922, Jethumal started his New Sindhi Library and the Cheap Literature Series, through which he brought out about a hundred books on all kinds of subjects, original writings or translations from other languages. Jethumal himself was the chief contributor to these series with his adaptations in story form of some of the greatest world classics in fiction and drama. These included Tagore's *The Wreck*, Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna*, Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness*, *Gil Blas* and other classics. These were followed by Acharya Gidwani's condensations of some of Kalidasa's works like *Malvika Agnamitra*, *Vikram Urvashi*, *Raghuvansh* and *Kumar Sambhav*, all written in a simple Hindi-like style, recreating the period of those tales. The last in this series was Girdhari Kirpalani's collected *Stories of Rabindranath* (1927). Similar to the above collection were Shewaram Lalla's *Stories of Tolstoy* (1928) published by *Sindhu*, our last great literary magazine; N. R. Malkani's *Stories from the Mahabharata* published by *Kahani*, our greatest story magazine in 1940, and Manohardas Kauromal's *Moral Stories* published by the Kauromal Sahit Mandal, the largest book depot in Sind.

About 1925 began the period when the whole world, still suffering from the aftermath of the first World War, found itself heading for the second world conflagration. Economic and political conditions had grown very grave and the struggle for India's independence had already been launched. These events had their repercussions on all the Indian literatures. Under the leadership of Munshi Premchand short stories in most of the Indian languages were written on social and economic problems, and the same tendency also appeared in the Sindhi short story. Between 1925 and 1940 there was a spate of translations from the Indian languages, and hundreds of stories from Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi were translated into Sindhi. This period of translation tallied with the era of monthly magazines in which the stories were published, *Sunder Sahit Risalo* by Mellaram Vaswani being

the earliest. This was followed by *Sikh Tract*, *Ratan*, *Kahani* and *Asha*, all of which enriched Sindhi literature in this *genre* for years on end. But since it is impossible to record all these stories in the space of this paper, I shall put down only a few outstanding ones, and indicate the range of the rest by merely mentioning the names of their writers.

In 1942, in collaboration with my friend T. H. Advani, I published a volume called *Modern Short Stories of Indian Life*, which consisted of the best stories selected from a vast number in the various Indian languages. These stories, which we picked out from their Sindhi translations, were re-translated into English:—

"The Apple" by Ravindranath Mitra

"The Gate-keeper" by Dhoomketu

"The Poet" by Kanayalal Thakurdas

"The Burglar" by A. S. P. Ayyar

"The Stone" by Apindranath Ashk

"What a Story!" by An anonymous writer

"The Brahmin's Wife" by Assanand Mamtara

"Brother Abdul Rahman" by Amarlal Hingorani

The last two of these are by Sindhi writers of note; and the very last was submitted by me, as the most representative Sindhi story, to a European compiler who was collecting material for a volume of Indian stories at a P.E.N. gathering in Bombay last year. He appreciated it greatly and I am told it has already appeared in a Unesco publication. Other great Indian stories which have been translated into Sindhi are by writers like Tagore, Premchand, Sudarshan, Kamalakant Varma, Ranbir Singh, Akhtar Hussain, Ahmad Abbas, Krishin Chander, Rajendra Bedi, Sadatali Manto, Sankertaya and others. Some of the best stories written by Western masters have also been translated into Sindhi and have enriched its literature. These include selections from de Maupassant, Chekhov, Tolstoy, Gorky, Pushkin, Turgenev, O. Henry, Pearl Buck, Galsworthy and others.

In the period between the two world wars, apart from the above translations, some volumes of original short stories

were also published. The first of these was Jethumal Parsram's *Stories of a Disguised Person* (1923) based on the writer's personal observations of social life, in which occurs severe criticism of the sins of capitalists and fearless exposure of social evils like forced marriages, the bar against the re-marriage of widows, adultery, etc.

Pribhdas Bherumal's *Surgings of the Heart* (1932) is also a collection of stories based on minute observation of domestic life and the complications that a second marriage and step-children bring in its train. The stories in both these volumes, which strongly incline toward realism, prove that truth can be as interesting as fiction, if not more so. Mirza Nadirbeg was another effective writer on social themes. His work includes two interesting tales, "*Miss Rustomji*" and "*Mohini*," which appeared in the magazine *Sindhu*, round about 1933. Amarlal Hingorani is a powerful storyteller who derives his subjects from his legal profession. His masterpiece, already referred to as a Unesco choice, is "*Brother Abdul Rahman*"; other significant stories are "*Ram and Rahim*" and "*Sin of a Humble Girl*." Assanand Mamtora is the last original writer of this period, who specialized in a deep analysis of love and sex in his two volumes, *Stories of Love and Sin* (1939) and *The Mirror and Other Stories* (1943).

The fourth phase in the development of the short story is the one which started with the "Quit India" struggle of 1942. Independence was achieved in 1947, accompanied by partition. During this five-year period when the struggle for existence became acute, resulting in a lack of leisure, the novel gave place to the short story, which became the most popular form of the day. Many youthful writers who had picked up the principles and technique of the short story from their study of the vast number of stories of earlier days sprang up.

The most memorable volume this period yielded was one entitled *Flowers of the Desert* (1944) published by Gobind Malhi, the leading writer of this revival. It contained well conceived and finely executed stories on social and national themes by a group of young writers whose work seems to suffer from a pessimistic bias. Among the best stories of this

collection may be mentioned "*Sari*" by Bhagwan Lalwani, which depicts a painful picture of an acute scarcity, and "*Rahima*" by Shaikh Abdul Sattar, which is a powerful attack on the evil effects of incompatible partnerships in marriage and illicit love. Love and marriage also form the theme of a forceful story by Anand Golani entitled "*Espousal*." A selection called *Day-break* saw the light of day in 1945. Outstanding among these were Gobind Malhi's "*Rights of the Tiller*," Govind Panjabi's "*Niloo*," Jivat Narayani's "*Shameless*" and Kishin Khatwani's "*A Dog's Death*," which dealt, as the titles indicate, with proletarian themes. Bhagwan Lalwani scored a great literary hit with "*Leclan*," a daring exposition of love and sin and motherhood in a collection entitled *Tremblings*. This volume also contained some good stories by Anand Golani, our most prolific young story writer, which reflect his usual flair for nosing into the nooks and corners of life. Yet another volume, *Sindhi Stories* (1947), contained what is perhaps the masterpiece among modern Sindhi short stories—"Manjri Kolhin" by Lekhu Tulsiani, fearlessly yet delicately depicting the emotions of a low-caste girl.

In the same year another volume with the same title was published by Baghi Publications, containing the best story of Anand Golani, "*Honour*," a great and bold story on the problem of the unmarried mother. In yet another volume called *The White Beast* appears a powerful story "*Nazceran*" by Shaikh Ayaz, our most powerful young Muslim writer. His masterpiece, however, features in another collection, *Step Forward*, with the title "*The Laughing Girl*," a subtly psychological story of a happy-go-lucky girl who meets with a tragic end.

In 1947-48 came the exodus of Sindhi Hindus from Sindh and for some time the rising tide of Sindhi literature was stemmed. But as soon as the displaced population was only partially rehabilitated in various centres all over India the current began to flow again. As early as 1949, the first literary society called Sindhi Sahitya Mandal was formed in Bombay (the largest refugee centre), which has been reg-

ularly conducting study classes and competitions ever since, thereby encouraging the older and guiding the newer writers. The best stories approved by this Mandal are published in magazines like *Nai Dunya*, *Kahani*, *Hindvasi*, *Nargis* and in volumes like *Halcha! Lat*.

Similar literary societies and magazines have sprung up in centres for displaced Sindhis at Delhi, Ajmer, Jaipur, Gwalior, Gandhidham and other places and hold the torch of Sindhi literature aloft and bright. For the first two or three years, there were signs of violent "progressive" trends appearing in our stories and poems; but for the last year or two the balance has been restored and our literature has become truly progressive, not in the political sense but literally, aiming at the creation of a new heaven for all mankind. As the writers of this period are too numerous to record I shall content myself with mentioning only the names of prominent ones—Anand Golani, Kirat Babani, Gobind Malhi, Gobind Punjabi, Sugun Ahuja, Moti Prakash, Krishin Rahi, Tara Mirchandani, Sundri Utam, Popati Hiranandani, Kishore Pahuja. So far, only two volumes of collected original stories by individual writers have been published: *Sad Stories of these Attractive Times* by Popati Hiranandani and *Price of Passion* by Sugun Ahuja.

At present the greatest impediment in the growth of our literature is caused by the Indian Government, which does not recognize Sindhi as one of the major regional Indian languages. It is true that in a strictly technical sense, Sindhi is not a regional language of India, because Sindh is no longer an Indian region. But such large numbers of Sindhis have settled down in India, that to deny recognition to their language and expose it to the danger of deterioration, just when they have lost their region for no fault of theirs, is like adding insult to injury. Sindhi literary societies all over India have agitated through conferences and representations to the Central Government to include Sindhi in the schedule of modern Indian languages. And when this is done—as it is bound to be—Sindhi literature, which is the principal vehi-

cle of the rich heritage of Sindhi culture, will increasingly add to the literary and cultural treasures of India.

THE TAMIL SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

DR. A. CHIDAMBARANATHA CHETTIAR

, While the art of short-story writing in Tamil is only 30 years old, its genesis may be sought in the early records of literature. There is a variety of prose mentioned in *Tolkappiyam*, the earliest grammar extant (15th century B.C.), which approximates to fiction. Although certain verses contained in *Kalittorai*, *Narrinai*, *Agananuru* and other works present very briefly only one episode, as required by a short story, and treat of men, women, human relationships and circumstances, they cannot be regarded as short stories proper. For according to Edgar Allan Poe: "A short story is a *prose* narrative requiring from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal." The *Panchatantra* tales of the sixth century A.D., Madana Kama Rajan's story and the Vikramaditya stories had all existed and gained a foothold as imaginative literature in prose but all such stories are not "short stories." Later, the Rev. Mr. Beschi of the 18th century and Ashtavadanam Veeraswamy Chettiar, author of *Vinoda Kasa Manjari*, made their own contributions to Tamil prose, in which they drew largely on imagination for their material.

Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) may be rightly regarded as the precursor of Tamil short-story writers. His stories, "*Tindima Sastri*," depicting the customs and manners of Kerala, especially of the Nambudri Brahman, and "*Swarna Kumari*" wherein a Brahmo Samajist married to a Brahmo girl becomes a disciple of Lokamanya Tilak, are the forerunners of the regular short stories that were to come after.

Isolated attempts at short-story writing appear to have been made by Vedanayakam Pillai (1824-89), V. V. S. Aiyar (1881-1925) and Marai Malai Atigal. Marai Malai Atigal

adopted the documentary method and unfolded the action by means of letters entitled "*Kokilambal Kadithangal*." Each letter appears like a short story but all the letters are dovetailed and when read together give the impression of a novel rather than a series of short stories.

It would not be wrong to say that our fellow member "Kalki" (Shri R. Krishnamoorthy)* is the father of short story writing in Tamil. For two decades, by his association first with *Ananda Vikatan* and later with the other periodical *Kalki*, he has established a reputation as one of the best short story writers in Tamil. His felicity as a writer is well known. He is able to adapt himself to many varied forms of composition such as the novel, the short story and the essay. He inclines to the view that if the novel is a pocket-theatre, the short story is a novel in miniature, which explains the length of some of his stories.

Almost contemporaneous with "Kalki" are writers such as S. Vridhachalam, known familiarly as "Pudumai Pithan" (1908-48), and K. P. Rajagopalan, whose names will be remembered by posterity as those of forceful and penetrating short-story writers. They have both passed away in recent years, neither being in affluent circumstances at the time of his death. In the words of Shri M. R. Jambunathan: " 'Pudumai Pithan' was a top-rank short-story writer of great originality." He also translated several of the world's best short stories. These have been published under the titles *Ulagattu Siru Kathaigal* and *Deivam Kodutta Varam*. Several of his original stories reflect the influence of Maupassant, Kipling, Tolstoy and Gorky. His work bears the impress of a morbid genius flanked by a wildly passionate temperament which brooked no discipline. One imagines that his creative genius must have taken his pen and guided it in strange and unknown directions. He depicts life as it might be, chooses odd nooks and corners for his settings and brings to bear on his work a gift for condensation unequalled by any of the Tamil writers of our day.

* "Kalki" was living then and present at the Conference. He passed away on December 5th, 1955.

The characters in K. P. Rajagopalan's stories are realistic and three-dimensional. The commonplace as well as the generally ignored facts of life come within his province. His style, rich in suggestion, has the capacity to set the reader's imagination on fire. He uses words which are pregnant with meaning and selects details which have an evocative significance. Posterity will remember him not only for his original work, *Kanamale Kadal*, *Punar Janmam* and *Kanakambaram* but also for his *Irattai Manithan*, a masterly translation of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

There is now a legion of short-story writers in Tamil, for the short story has come into its own, mainly owing to the tempo of modern life and the several Tamil magazines which have encouraged its development. Among these magazines may be mentioned *Panchamirtham*, *Lakshmi*, *Ananda Vikatan*, *Kalki*, *Manikodi*, *India*, *Prasada Vikatan*, *Ananda Bodini*, *Kalai Magal*, *Vasantam*, *Chintanai*, *Amudha Surapi*, *Sakti*, *Ponni*, *Kalaikadir*, *Kumutam*, *Katal*, *Siru Kathai*, *Ajanta*, *Swadesamitran* (weekly), *Dinamani Kadir*, *Vecra Kesari*, *Eela Kcsari* and *Dinakaran*.

As it is not possible to do justice to all the stories in the time at my disposal, I shall confine myself to a few, hoping that important omissions, if any, will be overlooked.

The President of this Conference said at the previous P.E.N. All-India Writers' Conference held in Banaras that "the aim of literature is not so much to entertain or to instruct as to kindle the spirit in man." "*Chidambaram*," by Subramanya Bharati, is one of the stories which embodies this ideal. It asserts that Chidambaram (the abode of Shiva) is not only the same as but is Srirangam (the shrine of Vishnu), and that Chidambaram is also Palani (the habitation of Subramania), that is to say "God is everywhere and one." "*Kuni Sundari*" by C. Rajagopalachariar is another such story. In this story a Vedanta Shastri, a retired sub-judge and widower, finds himself through force of circumstances married to a young girl of 22 who is a hunchback. The Upanishadic conception that looking at her body one does not see the essential woman and that when one looks at the essen-

tial part, her body is not seen, is forcefully conveyed. "*Tamil Mangai*" by K. P. Rajagopalan, "*Vedanta Kesari*" by "Jeeva" (Narana Durai Kannan), "*Irattai Tamarai*" by N. Chidambara Subramanyam and "*Amara Oviyam*" by Mahudum also belong to this category.

It has been asserted by a few writers like Vachell and Paine that the short story is not a serious contribution to literature. It is an attempt on the part of writers in all languages to cater to a public that wants to be amused for a short while rather than instructed. Those stories which underscore the difference between preaching and practice in all spheres of life are well received. For example, "*Tani Oruvanukku*" by "Pudumai Pithan" contains in almost every line a satiric touch characteristic of the author. He shows that while people wax eloquent on public platforms saying, "If there is one man who has no food we will destroy this world," Amacci Samban, a Harijan orphan and several others like him, die for want of food. "*Vedanta Kesari*" by "Jeeva" relates how a Kaivalya Gnani tempts the wife of one of his devoted disciples. "*Prathivathi Bayankaram*," by the same author, shows how a Sattainathar who talks glibly of his socialistic views swindles people in a lottery, causing acute distress. "*Ponniiah*" by Govindan concerns itself with the president of a district board with reformist views who tries to get rid of an untouchable, the victim of a flood, by giving him 50 rupees rather than allow him to occupy the *pial* of his spacious house. "*Nondi Kuruv*," by "Kanaiyali" similarly shows how a college girl who waxes eloquent over the prevention of cruelty to animals and birds, herself acts in an inhuman manner most of the time.

That it is society which creates the criminal is a theme popular among short story writers in Tamil, as in other languages. Shri Rajagopalachariar in his "*Pattasu*," Annadurai in "*Kuravali Var*," "Pudumai Pithan" in his "*Ponnagaram*" and "Jeeva" in his "*Kolu Bammai*" have all attempted a vindication of the individual as against the group.

Then, too, a great deal of old wine has been poured into new bottles. "*Drohama?*" (Is it Treason?) by K. P. Raja-

gopalan and "*Rayasam Venkanna*" by Karunanithi are stories based on the historical incident by which Tanjore passed on from the Nayaks to the Maharattas. These two writers see Venkanna from different angles and the stories are the result of their creative imagination brought to bear on the dry facts of history. "*Putali*" by Pushpaturai Subramanyam makes Ajatasatru live again amongst us. *Araikurai Kathaigal* (Incomplete Stories) by "Konashtai" give new shape and colour to Yayathi's exchange of his old age with his son's youth.

Another favourite theme with Tamil short-story writers is the life and livelihood of the artist. "Kalki" portrays how a story writer, finding that his beloved is taken away by a film producer, becomes a *sanyasi* (hermit). Vindan shows how a Tamil writer, when neglected by his own people, goes to the North, writes in Hindi under a pseudonym and becomes very popular. More than a touch of irony results in the situation when his books are widely translated into Tamil and become best-sellers. "Pudumai Pithan" in "*Kaditham*" (Letter) treats of people who write long letters to authors privately in appreciation of their works but hesitate to praise them in public, thereby perpetuating their poverty. Shri N. Chidambara Subramanyam's "*Elutata Katai*" (An Unwritten Tale) indicates the difficulties which surround the art of short-story writing.

Some stories stand out because of a sensitive understanding of human nature shown by their authors. A. Ramanathan, T. K. Sreenivasan and Dr. (Shrimati) Tiripurasundari belong to this category. "*Visittira Pengal*" (Wonderful Women) and "*First Class Ticket*" by the last named are as fresh and interesting as the stories by Bani Ray in Bengali and reflect a most acceptable spontaneity and realism in the dialogue. Vintan, who hails from the labouring class, like Govinda in Maithili, has made an interesting contribution to our proletarian literature. Subtle delineation of juvenile attitudes and reactions are to be found in Periyaswamy Thooran, M. Varadarajan, Rajam Krishnan and K. V. Jagannathan. Still others stress the importance of inspiration in the life of the creative artist. "Jeeva's" "*Fiddle Nadha Brahman*" and

Pushpathurai Subrahmanyam's "*Jeeva Silai*" are instances in point.

Social problems like the removal of untouchability, widow remarriage, inter-caste marriages and so on have been wrought into the texture of many of the stories. "Kalki's" "*Visha Mantiram*" depicts how the presence of a Harijan inspector in a post office has not affected the postmaster's capacity to cure a snake-bite by means of a spell.

Humanitarian trends also animate stories like "*To a Single Individual*" by "Pudumai Pithan," "*Desantari*" by Gurusamy and "*Koyil Vilakku*" (The Lamp in the Temple) by Akilan. In the last named, Akilan has shown with deep pathos how a child is born in the utter darkness of a stormy night, while a shop owner (during rationing days), who refused to sell a bottle of kerosene to the child's father, busies himself with switching on electric lights, which he has had installed at a cost of thousands of rupees for a particular occasion.

Tamil does not lack writers who are devotees of the "art for art's sake" cult. Among them special mention must be made of "Mu. Va." (M. Varadarajan) who scorns cheap popularity and is content to express his thoughts in flawless Tamil to a limited public able to understand and appreciate his work. A collection of his stories entitled *Vidutalaiya* contains some exquisite specimens of literary art. "Jeeva's" *Mullai* and Mahutum's *Thirumaraiyin Theerpu* also illustrate this trend.

In Akilan's story "*Pen Pavam*," which centres round a bus accident and is told with remarkable power, we find an illustration of the technique in which one story is made to develop into another so successfully, with skill and restraint, that they give the impression of being one. S. P. Harshan follows this method in "*Kodiyum Kolum*" by combining two episodes.

The modern tendency to make the short story, among other literary forms, a vehicle for propaganda is evident in Karunanithi, Annadurai, A. S. P. Ayyar, Yogi and Suddhananda Bharatiar, who are generally regarded as faulty in this respect. "Propaganda is a concession, a big concession no doubt,

to the taste of a large section of the people of the time," said Paine. Public taste and knowledge help to determine the supply and great collaboration is expected between the reader and the writer of a short story. A highly artistic work is rarely popular in our country because the half-literate readers, whose name is legion, expect the author to state rather than to suggest his meaning.

In Annadurai's volume entitled *Siru Kathaigal* (Short Stories) published in 1947, the creative element becomes marginal; *Karpanai Chiltram* has stories in which propaganda is subordinated to his creative genius. Though conscious didacticism in a short story is to be avoided as far as possible, to let it go without a general moral philosophy is to take away the greatness of art. Even if we accept Hudson's verdict that "the aim of the short story is to provide amusement for the idle hour," that story should be regarded as the best, other things being equal, which kindles the spirit in us.

Another short-story writer who has impressed me greatly is "Mayavi." In a remarkable story entitled, "*Pani Thirai*," he relates how Krishnan and Ramu who have been friends for over 20 years fall out over a house owned by the latter and occupied by the former for that period. Ramu, finding himself in financial difficulties, asks for the house. Krishnan refuses to vacate owing to misrepresentations on the part of Sait, the prospective buyer. The false prestige of Krishnan, the lovable nature of Ramu, the waywardness and cruelty of Krishnan's friends, who go to the length of scorning the owner of the house, the pathetic position of Ramu's ailing wife, Krishnan's dramatic appearance at Ramu's house, his offer to vacate the house to allow the patient to live there, are all portrayed with vividness, insight and sympathy. The characters live in our minds long after we have read the story and the events impress us with their vividness and realism.

Among translations, the stories from Indian and Continental languages translated by "Pudumai Pithan," K. P. Rajagopalan, R. Veelinathan, Senapathi, T. N. Kumaraswami, S. Guruswamy and A. K. Jayaraman deserve special mention.

The value of the contributions to the development of the art of story writing for children made by A. Valliappa, Tamil Vanan, Ambuli Mama and Kannan can scarcely be exaggerated. Mention must also be made of C. M. Ramachandram Chettiar, K. Appadurai and Palur Kannappa Mudaliar, all of whom have written excellent stories for children. Among Jaffna writers, Aryarathnam, Vaithulingam, Sambandam and Ilangaiyarkan appear to be eminent. Prominent among humorous writers in Tamil are S.V.V., Periyaswamy Thooran, Suki and Nadodi: they have endeared themselves to a host of readers.

If I were asked to recommend a dozen Tamil short stories eminently suitable for translation into other Indian languages, I would recommend K. P. Rajagopalan's "*Kanamale Kathal*," "Pudumai Pithan's" "*Vali*," "Kalki's" "*Visha Menthiram*," Suddhananda Bharati's "*Kadikara Sangili*," Akilan's "*Ithaya Ciraiyil*," Vintan's "*Mullai Kodiyal*," Lakshmi's "*Vil Vandi*," "Jeeva's" "*Vedanta Kesari*," "Mayavi's" "*Panittirai*," T. K. Sreenivasan's "*Tunba Kathai*," Pushpatturai Subramanyam's "*Jeeva Silai*" and Kanai Ali's "*Nondi Kuruvi*."

THE TAMIL SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

The mediæval ages all over the world were full of long interminable romances. But the novel, when it emerged for the first time from the pen of Samuel Richardson in England, was briefer and up to date. While romances dealt with non-existent giants and impossible heroes and heroines, the novels dealt with life as lived around and about us. They evolved in various forms such as the social novel, the picaresque novel, the novel of adventure, the historical novel, the novel with a purpose, the detective novel, etc. But in course of time, especially in the modern age and in our century—the century of speed, of hurry, of science, of politics, of a thousand and one preoccupations—when life is lived at high pressure and

not as in the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth I or Queen Victoria, even the novel is felt to be long and boring. The novel itself is becoming a long short story, if one can use such an expression.

The drama has been somewhat displaced by the cinema, and where it has not been so displaced, it has taken its beauty and colour and realism from the cinema. In the same way, the short story, if it has not displaced the novel, has largely influenced the novel in reducing its size and making its canvas less ample and less crowded. It has shaped it into a more compact form so as to give us a clear and concise cross-section of life, instead of giving us a limited but fairly complex portion of the infinite complexities of life.

In Tamil literature even romances were few in number. Its glory lay in its poetry, especially spiritual poetry. The novel and the short story have newly emerged in Tamil literature in this century. The short story especially has had a considerable efflorescence in the last decade. It is too new to us to enable us to evaluate it in the light of universal literature and art. But it is time that such a task was performed and there can be no better occasion for such a task than a P.E.N. Conference.

I shall assess in this paper the recent phenomenal growth of the short story in Tamilnad, its present state and its future possibilities. A recent writer who has published the *World's One Thousand Best Short Stories* says:—

A short story may be a mere anecdote of three hundred words or a work of ten thousand or fifteen thousand words. In context, it may be anything from a glimpse of character and incident to a highly finished picture of life. But it should be a complete work of imagination; its effect achieved with a minimum of personages and events.

According to him 3,000 words would be the ideal average. He says further: "The short story would seem to have developed most freely in countries where there is a joyous outlook on life."

There is much truth in this view. Mr. Barry Pain, in his booklet on the short story in the *Art and Craft of Letters*

Series refers to what a London morning newspaper wrote on June 9th, 1914:—

The commercialisation of letters is more likely to affect the short story than any other form of self-expression because, at its meridian, it is one of the most exacting, the most profoundly intimate and difficult of all the arts. It demands leisure, patience, and meticulous sense of form, and an esthetic equipment with which modern methods are all at odds. But this is a partial explanation. The fact is that English literature has never mastered the short story.

Mr. Barry Pain does not fully agree with such an extreme view, but he also says:—

In so far as it points out that there is but little art in most of the short stories appearing in our popular magazines and that there may be commercial reasons for this, it is a just criticism.

The fact is that if the short stories are to appear in magazines and meet the public there only, then they will never rise to the rank of pure and high literature. The newspaper editors know what will increase their circulation and naturally look at things from the business point of view. The stories will then almost always have a happy ending even if that makes it inartistic. Every author will tend to repeat himself and overproduce what he finds to be acceptable and successful. He will never be able to rise above the level of his average reader.

A short story is not a pocket edition of a novel or a novel in a nutshell. It need not be confined to a single episode. But it must delineate character with a few clear strokes and the dialogue used in it must have appropriateness and suggestiveness. There must not be in it any repetition or redundancy or ill-chosen words. It must combine brevity, lucidity and force. Mr. Barry Pain says: "The novelist gives more to the reader and asks less of him. The short story writer gives less and asks more."

Quite recently, Mr. Angus Wilson has written an article on "The Short Story" in the *P.E.N. News* for Winter 1954. He refers to the so-called difficult and tricky nature of the short story as a literary form. Speaking of its delicate fragility, which it is difficult to master and shape, he says:—

On the whole, unless he or she is moved by purely economic motives the novice will usually decide in the end that the novel is safer.... And so flow out hundreds upon hundreds of shapeless novels that disfigure our shelves today.... In any "form" under twenty pages, incoherence reveals itself, emptiness is apparent. In any form over seven hundred pages, the reader is rocked into drowsy acceptance, as by the rhythm of a train.

Both are equally difficult literary forms if high standards are set up by the author or by the public. But both are the easiest of all literary forms if standards are forgotten, because anyone can spin a yarn of any size. Mr. Angus Wilson says: "It is a mistake to suppose that the trivial is any more acceptable when written at short length than at great." He rightly condemns "commercial" short stories. He says:—

The short story is an admirable vehicle for expressing *one* serious and sensitive reaction to *one* aspect of life; it may even on occasion, I think, hold an additional under plot.

Only then can it be a perfect precious little gem.

The short story is thus a modern literary form but its modernity should not be a reason for being great literature, valuable for all time. But what is great literature? Ruskin says:—

Here are two things: yourself and the world's literature. If you approach the world's literature in the desire to get into communication with it, what should you expect from it? Entertainment? No, not primarily; sometimes it will be entertaining and as you get more and more attuned to it so will it be more and more frequently entertaining but not always. There will be and should be times when it is nothing less than dynamite to your complacency, an uncomfortable disturbing factor, a solvent to old assents and easy inertias, a destructive force that leaves you with much to repair or build anew. So entertainment is not the primary thing you expect from it. And by the same argument, not relief and solace. These gifts often it will deal to you, but by no means always. An escape, is it this, as some have said? An escape from the brutality of the real world to more perfect realms of the imagination, where the women are more fair and the men more heroic and love lasts and children are more grateful, and justice is done by the good? Not that? Not for adult souls. What is it then? Simply this and exactly this: that you may have life and have it more abundantly. But what is life? Life is conscious contact with environment. We are more and more alive in so far as we are in touch with a larger and larger environment. To his natural powers of

apprehension man has added by a thousand mechanical devices, the means to establish contact with immeasurable heights and depths. And by far the greatest of these devices for increasing life is the written word, whereby he sets up communication with the master spirits, seeing with their keener eyes, hearing with their livelier ears, thinking with their subtler brains, feeling with their larger hearts, and touching God on their wings.

Thus it is clear that, like all other forms of pure literature, the short story also should not aim at mere entertainment or relief or solace or escapism but at a clearer, truer, deeper, wider and higher vision of life.

If with this background in mind we test the short story as a literary form in India, we must say that as a whole the short story has not touched the heights of great literature. Rabindranath Tagore was great in many realms and though he has certainly left some great short stories, he cannot be classed as a great story writer either in the realm of the short story or that of the longer novel. Such short stories as "*The Cabuliwallah*", "*The Pamb Gh*", "*The Wandering Guest*", "*The Landing Stairway*", "*The Hungry Stones*" and some others have much imaginative charm and poetic beauty. Noteworthy work has been produced by Shri Khandekar in Marathi, by Premchand in Hindi, by Masti V. Iyengar in Kanarese and by other writers of distinction and ability in other modern Indian languages. Many of these have been translated into Tamil during the last two decades.

Among older writers of the short story in Tamil, Shri C. Rajagopalachariar and T. Subramania Bharati are the most prominent. Like Tagore, Bharati was a supreme lyrical and patriotic poet. His stories in *Kathan Kotha* have a charm of lyric moods and beauty of style like Tagore's but have not in a pre-eminent degree that power of characterization and appropriateness of dialogue and tense situations and moods, which are of the very essence of the short story. But his "*Gnana Ratham*" (The Car of Wisdom) is a great story and combines imaginative fantasy and unity of mood. Rajaji is supreme as a politician and a statesman and an administrator but cannot be classed among the top-ranking short-story writers. But his clarity of mind and simplicity of style and

his incomparable humour have enabled him to achieve noteworthy success in that line also. His short stories have a didactic and political aim and ought to undo untouchability and popularize prohibition.

To evaluate the Tamil short story aright we must especially study its trends in the works of persons who have been devoted exclusively to its authorship. Three special factors should be borne in mind. The short stories have mostly appeared in the popular weekly and monthly Tamil magazines such as *Mani Kodi*, *Ananda Vikatan*, *Kalki*, *Kalai Nagah Kaveri*, etc. Magazines with a large circulation and with an eye to the keeping up and increasing of such circulation will always have their attention riveted more to public taste than to art ideals. Further, the magazines have as a large section of their readers modern women and adolescent children who have special tastes of their own. Further, each of them wishes for special Deepavali Annuals called *Malas* (Blossoms). The short stories in such *Malas* used some time ago to centre round Deepavali incidents in social life. As short stories are well paid for, talented authors were eager to satisfy the magazine editors who were, in their turn, eager to satisfy the subscribers to their magazines.

All these external factors have coloured, consciously or unconsciously, the imaginations of the short-story writers. Most of the stories centre round conjugal love. Even here, courtship is generally taboo, though it peeps in gently and shyly here and there. Even in regard to conjugal love, it has to be of a somewhat conventional pattern. It is no doubt true that within such a limited range some writers have painted the subtle shades and varieties of human emotion with great insight and dexterity. The impression of illegitimate love is studiously avoided. Even if a violent oscillation is hinted at or described, it is dexterously eliminated and the proprieties are kept inviolate.

There are but few historical novels in Tamil, and historical short stories are even fewer. Such historical fiction as we have is but a projection of the present into the past, as no attempt is made to study the physical environment or the

contemporary trends revelatory of the times or the varied historical literature of the period.

Emotions other than conjugal love are seldom delineated. The writers, further, seem to be conversant only with the temperaments and habits of speech of their own social set. Whenever an attempt is made to delineate men and women of their own social set, an air of unreality creeps in, as the writer's eye is on types rather than on persons of flesh and blood. Further elements of unreality are evident when an attempt is made to delineate men and women outside their social set.

To become a great and successful short-story writer it is necessary that an author should have a wide, deep and intimate knowledge of life, interpret it as it strikes him, and realize and express the uncommon glories of the seemingly common, humdrum life. The manner must be as striking as the matter. The author must strike the golden mean between laconic brevity and dull prolixity. It is only when telling incidents, clear characterization and brief and bright yet appropriate dialogue combine that we can have great short stories.

Despite these factors, it is worthy of note that many men and women of high literary gifts have taken to this new literary form and have been perfecting it as an art form. I may mention here V. V. S. Aiyar, "Pudumai Pithan," the late R. Krishnamurthi (founder and editor of *Kalki*) who was also an eminent novelist, K. P. Rajagopalan (known as Ku Pa Ra), Shankar Ram, P. Balakrishnan, T. G. R., K. Chandrasekharan, T. N. Subramaniam, T. N. Kumaraswami and others. I myself have done some work in this branch of literature. Among the talented women who have done good work in the realm of the short story may be mentioned Guhapriyai, Vasumathi, Kumudini, Gauri, Aruttaiva, Janaki, Harini and others. Special mention should be made of S. V. Vijayaraghavachari (known as S.V.V.) who wrote unique breezy, humorous short stories in Tamil describing the oddities of contemporary individuals and domestic and social life, such as "*Vasantan Varalaru*," "*Puthu Nattupen*," "*Sabash Parvati*" and others.

I feel that though the Tamil language surpasses all other languages in its wonderful heart-entrancing devotional poetry and has entered the ranks of the world's literature through the *Tirukural* and the *Kamba Ramayana*, and no Tamil literature now or hereafter can rival them, yet the modern Tamil lyric and patriotic poetry, especially of S. Bharati, is of world importance and wide appeal. The modern Tamil short story has touched modern life at vital points and has attained the rank of high literary perfection and can hold its undernourished head in any all-India or world-wide galaxy of short stories. Its supreme merit is that a generation of talented and gifted writers have shown how Tamil prose style can be a thing of beauty and a joy forever, how it can have classic grace united to modern suppleness; and how the life as lived around us, if seen with true imaginative vision and delineated and expressed with graphic power, can become more attractive than the romances of the older era, how our seemingly drab, dull, dreary day-to-day life can become "apparelled in celestial light, the glory and freshness of a dream."

The short story in Tamil today is thus in a stage of great experimentation. Some writers look abroad to Chekov, Dostoevsky and other Russian writers; others to great short-story writers of Western Europe, Britain and the U.S.A. This habit is gradually waning. The gifted writers of today are daily perfecting the new literary form. Tamil prose was but a puny, emaciated being till this century. It is now a mighty stalwart. But its supreme achievement, combining strength, suppleness and sweetness, will be in the evergrowing new realm of the short story.

THE TELUGU SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

SHRI A. NAGA GOPALA RAO

The short story is probably the oldest and certainly the most modern of recognized literary forms. It has always been strongly influenced by the moral, political, social and literary

climate of the world in which it is created. In its simplest form, it centres round a situation involving human beings confronted with some kind of problem requiring some kind of decision, physical or psychological as the case may be.

The simplest and best criterion of all, perhaps, is the test of "memorableness." The superior story is, as William Poden has said, simply one which is worth re-reading. The superior story remains in the reader's mind because it leaves there some residue of truth or beauty; because it has, through the alchemy of the creative imagination, transformed some aspect of life into art.

The French author, Guy de Maupassant, had a group of followers in every country. The Russian, Chekhov, came to have considerable influence upon short-story writers, while more recently, the Americans Ernest Hemingway and William Saroyan have been widely imitated. Among English writers, Kipling, Wells, Oscar Wilde and W. W. Jacobs are familiar to Indian readers.

Guruzada Apparao is the first man to have written a short story in Telugu but Gudipati Venkatachalam is the leading writer, both in quality and quantity.

The most distinguished of the short-story writers of the older generation are Veluri Sivaramasastri, the author of more than 100 stories and Chinta Dikshtulu, who also has many stories to his credit. The earliest collection of his short stories, entitled *Yekadosi*, betrays a strong strain of idealism in his make-up.

Kavikondala Venkatarao deals with rural life in his short stories while Tata Krishnamurthi and Mokkapati Narasimhasastri reflect a delightful sense of humour in their work.

Adivi Bapiraju, a very versatile writer, and Tallavajjula Sivasankara Sastri, a great scholar, enjoy top rank among Telugu short-story writers and have many disciples.

Very popular among Telugu readers are Bhamidipati Kameswararao and Munimanikyam Narasimharao. They choose incidents from everyday life with an innate gift for humour. They write stories which are outstandingly agreeable

and pleasant to read. Munimanikyam, who has an easy, flowing and even style, also stands out as a humorist among Telugu writers. The pure and pleasant Telugu of the common folk is used by Sripada Subrahmanyasastry in his stories, which tend to be lengthy and do not bear any impress of Western influence. He is a prolific writer and has several volumes of short stories to his credit.

Srinivasa Siromani, Malladi Ramakrishnasastry, V. N. Bhushan, G. V. Krishnarao, Vajjula Kalidas, Muddu Kistna, Narla Venkateswararao, Naraharisetty Venkataratnam, Anisetty Subbarao, Kodovatigauti Kutumbarao, Gopichand, Madhavapeddi Gopalakrishna Gokhale, Boddu Bapiraju, Konakalla, Kanakamedala G. Ramakrishnasastry, Ramakrishna Reddi, Mudda Viswanadham. "Karuna Kumar," "Amarendra," "Jayasri," "Hitasri," "Srivatsava" and Palagummi Padmaraju, who has won a prize for his *Galivana* (Cyclone) in an International short-story competition, are among the best short-story writers in Telugu. Other writers include Suravaram Pratapareddi, Nandagiri Venkatarao, Nelluri Kesavaswami, Kaloji Narayanarao, Bhagi Narayanamurti, A. R. Krishna, Potlapathi Rama Rao, B. Krishnarao and Madapati Hanumantharao, the Mayor of Hyderabad. Telugu literature can also boast of women writers whose work is noteworthy. In this group Kanuparti Varalakshamma, Illiudala Saraswatidevi, Yallapragada Sita Kumari, Kommuri Padmavati Devi, Malati Chandur and Utukuri Lakshmikantamma deserve special mention.

Most of these writers are familiar with European literature and owe much to its influence, though they have by no means achieved the standard of their Western contemporaries. Translations of the work of Western writers, especially that of Maupassant and Chekov, have been made.

Among Telugu monthlies, *Bharati*, *Sarada* and *Jvala*, and, among weeklies, *Andhrapatrika*, *Andhraprabha* and *Krishnapatrika*, often publish short stories. These as well as others now appearing in the field have stimulated production in this branch of literature.

The short story, one feels, will continue to be popular as a literary form. It is providing an opportunity to the writer

to portray life, and to present his views on men and matters without unduly trespassing on the reader's time. In our modern world, ruled by the twin gods of speed and bustle, any work in which brevity is observed is bound to succeed.

There is a bright future for this medium which claims a larger proportion of readers all over the world than any other form of creative literature.

THE URDU SHORT STORY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

MR. JALALUDDIN AHMED

The progress made by the Urdu short story during the years since Pakistan was established has been rather slow and casual. From the mass of short stories—good, bad and indifferent—published during these years on quite an impressive scale, it is possible to pick up a dozen collections, and be sure that nothing really outstanding has been missed.

So wide indeed is the disparity that, while the vast majority of the fiction produced recently is much below the mark, the dozen or so good volumes of short stories stand out as fine, cultivated gardens in the midst of thick, wild undergrowth. They break new ground in technique and fiction-craft, and deserve to be studied and analyzed at some length, for they have given Urdu fiction a definite lead in many directions.

The Urdu short story had its heyday in the middle and late 30's of this century, when the country was becoming conscious of political slavery in a rather gloomy mood, and there was a touch of pessimism about most of the best work produced in the beginning. Then there was a spurt of first-class writing talent, and as the new movement in literature gathered momentum few other forms of literature seemed to display so great a promise as the short story.

The flame, however, was short-lived, and the candle too small. In less than five years, the stage was again wearing

out, the audience dwindling. Young writers had suddenly achieved great heights, in borrowed techniques as well as in professional reputation, in many cases obviously not in keeping with their lesser genius and smaller talent.

For the next five years or so, they basked in the benevolent sunshine of a built-up readership which was not always clever enough to distinguish between genuine experimentation and casual, amateurish fiddling with words and images. Indeed Urdu fiction on the eve of the establishment of Pakistan had not really made any marked progress or an improvement upon what it had already achieved in the years between 1935 and 1942.

This "relaxation" soon after a period of brisk and hectic literary activity may partly be explained by the difficult, uncertain political conditions in which the people of the sub-continent found themselves during this period. Social disintegration, augmented by the break-up of some of the cherished values of life, certainly engendered fissiparous tendencies. But, apart from all this, there is plainly visible behind this torpor the lack of genuine inspiration and enduring talent.

The only inspiration which presented or asserted itself in a rather satirical and pessimistic vein was political in nature and found expression in a deluge of what may at best be termed literary tracts and pamphlets, even while they were cast in the form of fiction. And, like the French "Resistance" literature of the 40's, it served its purpose admirably—it achieved political freedom.

On the purely literary plane, however, this drain of writing talent away from literature to pamphleteering had its own consequences, and the first few months after the coming into being of Pakistan saw very little creative literary activity. While partisan, factual reporting and sentimental stories depicting communal riots dominated the literary scene, it was difficult to find during this period any real and profound expression of the far-reaching effects of the political division on social, cultural and individual life and feelings.

It was only slowly, often grudgingly and reluctantly, that the fierce heat of passion or partisanship gave place to an objective assessment, interpretation and evaluation of these vital consequences in human terms. This was by no means an easy affair, and most of the veteran short-story writers either chose oblivion or at least shifted ground.

It fell to the lot of the younger generation of writers to break the ice. They found new vehicles ranging from satire and reporting to fantasy and surrealistic symbolism; and the short story in their hands certainly widened its scope and outlook. They depicted with amazing sincerity, variety and colourfulness the changing pattern of life around them, and preserved not only brilliant situations but also rare glimpses of human emotion and behaviour in a period of transition from order to chaos, and back again from chaos to slowly reconstructed order.

This was a trying, protracted and painful process but, like many other crises in human history, it gave a new insight and incentive to writers. In the case of the Urdu short story its effect was doubly felt. It gave the writers an endless variety of theme and treatment, and filled the rather small gallery of stereotyped Urdu fiction portraits with a galaxy of living, vivid characters ostensibly drawn from real life—intelligent, ambitious, struggling, impatient, sceptical.

Indeed the canvas of the Urdu short story which had so far glowed with few other colours except the white and black of love and frustration, now took on countless fine shades and blends. The traditional love-sick hero, who for a change sometimes wore the mask of a sentimental revolutionary, now gave place to the uprooted refugee, the abducted girl, the man with a stricken conscience, the exploiter and the opportunist, the poor honest people who were lost between considerations of ethics and economics, the conscientious humanist whose loyalty and patriotism was doubted by both sides, and so on. A new set of characters had invaded the short story and for many years to come claimed it as their exclusive preserve.

Saadat Hasan Manto was about the only one among the veteran short-story writers to rise to the occasion and devote

himself fully to the theme of communal riots. He has been more prolific than any of his contemporaries during these years and it appears that the fast-moving events of 1947 were perfectly suited to his snappy, pungent style. He wrote more than 100 stories on the theme; some of them were as limited in scope and appeal as a cynical "tit-bit" or a wisecrack, while others were elaborately drawn stories, with meticulously conceived characters.

Manto more or less specialized in this field, writing at a tremendous speed and with a missionary zeal; but as always, his viewpoint was essentially cynical. In stories like "*Khol Do*" (Open It Up), "*Thanda Goshl*" (Cold Meat) and "*Suraj Singh*," his satire is Swiftian. His other stories, like "*Babu Gopi Nath*," have a balanced view and the approach is more genial.

His stories, frank and outspoken as they were, certainly served the purpose of unveiling and bringing before the eyes of the world what the lesser writers feared to expose, *viz.*, the corrupt and selfish mentality of petty officials, the frustration caused by the suppression of the sexual urge, which seeks its vengeance in so many ways, and the utter callousness of most of us towards what is happening to our neighbour next door.

It must be pointed out here, however, that the riot stories of Manto, apart from a new theme, offer very little by way of technique and their outlook is not always healthy and constructive. What is more, his tricks seem to be old and stale, lacking that element of surprise which caught one's fancy in his earlier stories eight or ten years ago.

Other short-story writers, belonging to the so-called "old guard," are Ahmed Ali, Aziz Ahmad, Hasan Askari, Akhtar Raipuri and Ghulam Abbas. It is regrettable that Ahmed Ali, who was one of the pioneers of the modern Urdu short story, has not published a single volume since partition. Akhtar Raipuri, too, has been lost to fiction, and Hasan Askari, who did publish a volume of short stories after the establishment of Pakistan, *Qiyamat Hamrekab Ae Na Ae* (The Day of

Reckoning May or May Not Come), has devoted himself more vigorously to criticism than to short-story writing.

When Askari published his first volume of short stories, *Jazeera* (Islands), he was at once acclaimed as a shrewd storyteller who could conceive an attractive story, depict characters with wonderful effect and also retain a note of sarcasm. His recent volume has only confirmed that view, but it seems that his analytic mind is slowly leading him away from fiction towards philosophy and literary criticism.

Mention may also be made here of Askari's translations from the French, for which he seems to possess an inexhaustible passion. He has translated into Urdu Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and has also compiled and edited for the Urdu reading public *Tilism-e-Hoshrubā*, an absolute gem in Oriental fiction. Askari is often taken up too much by his zeal to reform Urdu literature; one only wishes he could devote more energy to creative writing.

Aziz Ahmad, who is essentially a novelist, has also written a number of short stories. Some of these, like "*Tasawware Shaikh*" (The Vision of the Mystic), "*Zarrin Taj*" and "*Sasta Paisa*" (Easy Money), are outstanding for his skill in the creation of character and atmosphere. His genius, however, finds fuller flowering on the larger canvas of the novel. The short story as such seems to offer little scope for the vast scale on which he builds. "*Tasawware Shaikh*" is a good example of Ahmad's superb character-delineation, his keen observation and his intimate knowledge of the subject. But it runs to more than 20,000 words, and reads more like a novelette than a short story. It is spread over more than 20 years and depicts, from delicate angles, the impressions, desires, reactions and the whole complex working of the mind of an ascetic who succumbs to sexual temptation but still pretends to be above it.

Many of his other and more successful stories, like the exquisite "*Zarrin Taj*" and his earlier "*Madansena Aur Sadian*" (Madansena Through the Centuries), though they fulfil all the technical requirements of a short story, still

tend to overwhelm the reader by plot within plot; and the final effect is rather of a full-length film than of a single incident or character round which the story is supposed to be woven. The heroine Zarrin Taj, for example, in the story named after her, is no character; she is merely the symbol of emancipated aristocratic Oriental womanhood down the centuries, who was offered man's love but whose spirit yearned for something more which was denied her by a conservative social set-up. Zarrin Taj rebels as any enlightened, emancipated soul would. But in compressing the vast material into a short story, Aziz Ahmad has failed to do justice to Zarrin Taj as a character though he has succeeded in impressing the reader with Zarrin Taj as a symbol.

Unlike Aziz Ahmad, Ghulam Abbas is essentially a short-story writer and his genius is very well suited to the rigid requirements of this fastidious form. He is a slow writer, and has kept up his frugal production of neatly trimmed, effective stories. He is a painstaking craftsman, possessing a keen eye for character and a discerning sense of humour, which neither verges on full-fledged satire nor into vulgar frolic. His latest volume, *Annandi*, abounds in long-drawn and elaborately conceived plots, often difficult to handle within the limitations imposed by the canvas of the short story. But Ghulam Abbas seems to be equally at home while dealing with the heterogeneous characters inhabiting a whole town as in "*Annandi*," or in spotlighting a single trait of a particular character, as in "*Us Ki Beebi*" (His Wife). Apart from this volume, which gets its name from one of the stories included therein, Abbas has published only a few stories, but they are always well received and fully deserve the admiration of any lover of the simple art of story-telling.

As has already been pointed out, the present-day Urdu fiction of Pakistan owes not so much to veterans, like the ones mentioned above, as to the younger generation of short-story writers who have made consistent efforts to enrich the Urdu language with newer, fresher and more vigorous ideas. Among them, special mention must be made of two groups. One of these consists of those writers who had made their mark in

the days before partition and have carried on the tradition. The other group comprises those who came into prominence mostly after partition, when quite a few of the older writers were either lost in despair and too confused to be able to give the lead in the changed circumstances or had merely ignored the new situation in trying to rise above it and devoted themselves to other forms of literature.

The first of these groups would include Qudratullah Shahab, Quratul Ain Hyder, H. Ali, Ahmad Nadim Qasmi, Mumtaz Mufti, Shafiqur Rahman, Ibne Saeed and Mumtaz Shirin. The second group of young writers, who are more active today than they were five years ago, are A. Hameed, Ashfaq Ahmad, Shaukat Siddiqui, Intizar Hussain, Agha Babar, the sisters Hajira Masroor and Khadija Masroor, Ibne Insha, Shakila Akhtar, Riaz Raoofi and others.

Qudratullah Shahab is a steady, conscientious writer. His earlier work was rather sketchy and casual, but his gift has been constantly developing and progressing. He was the first to present, in a long short story, "*Ya Khuda!*" (Oh, God!), the immediate social and psychological impact of the riots, highlighting the problem of abducted women and the immensity of the problem of rehabilitation in view of the prevailing indifference to the moneyed class. But "*Ya Khuda!*" despite its elaborate pattern and topical interest, is not his greatest work. His art finds fuller and finer expression in his later stories, which are infused with a touch of light but very effective satire. His volume of short stories, *Nafsane*, contains psychological stories and sketches, but his best work still remains scattered in various periodicals.

Quratul Ain Hyder is one of the most discussed short-story writers today, but actually it was after the recent publication of her novel *Mere Bhi Sanam-Khano* (My Temples Too) that she came into prominence. She has a colourful, felicitous style, and her short stories, when they first began appearing in periodicals, were very popular. They had a freshness of style and technique and even the subjects were fascinating, inspired as she was by a keen love for the beautiful in what is past and dying. But style is never a sub-

stitute for subject-matter, and the trouble with Miss Hyder is that while she ably succeeds in recreating and reliving the atmosphere, she has no eye for character. Her men and women all exist in a bewitching twilight of dream and reality, ultimately making the reader share with them a corner in that lovely fairyland. But soon one feels the melancholy effect of the inherent frustration with which her characters are invariably weighed down. The keynote of her writings is an undying love for Beauty, Beauty which outlives death and decay, or is perhaps itself born of death and decay. This quality is probably attributable to her Roman Catholic schooling, which has had a definite influence on her outlook and in some of her earlier stories, there are direct references to it. As a stylist, however, Miss Hyder has a place all her own in Urdu fiction and some of the stories in the volume *Sitaron se Aage* (Beyond the Stars) are fascinating.

In sharp contrast to the highly sophisticated atmosphere to be found in the stories of Quratul Ain Hyder, there is the work of Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, who depicts rural life with all its romance and poverty, the grandeur of nature so touchingly contrasted with the sad plight of the village-dweller. Qasmi's talent is obviously of a versatile nature, and he has written extensively both in prose and verse. Of course his poetry seems much more effective than his short stories, but the latter are the product of a cultured and trained mind and are written with a very intimate knowledge of the subject. His interest in rural life sprang initially from his search for romance in the rustic but he slowly found that romance, unfortunately, was not the whole of the story in the life of village folk. Therefore, he began depicting rural life in all its beauty and misery, a fact which has tended to permeate his writing with a missionary zeal. Recently, he has devoted himself to political writings, which have little literary merit, but his short stories are a definite contribution to Urdu literature.

Shafiqur Rahman has specialized in light humour of a kind almost unknown to the Urdu reading public before him. Neither so refined as that of "Patras" nor so matter-of-fact and antiquated as that of Shaukat Thanvi, Shafiq's humour

arises from the inherent cheerfulness and carefreeness of his characters, who are happy and laughing because they want to be happy and laughing. The folly of love and the love of folly are both ably depicted by him, and some of his stock characters have achieved great popularity among the younger generation of readers. The jokes associated with them and the situations in which they are thrown are meticulously rehearsed at social gatherings. Shafiq, who produces stories at a steady pace of one volume a year, is beseeched by numerous fans not to kill his characters but to keep the partnership alive for ever! Recently Shafiq published a volume *Pachtavoy* which indicates a change in his style and attitude, being woven round a set of repentant characters; but the change is hardly for the better, and Shafiq himself must be aware of the fact.

Mumtaz Mufti, who began with delicious domestic stories like "*Apa*" and "*Mchdiwala Hath*" (The Myrtled Hand) dealing with intense psychological experiences or experiments, possesses the rare gift of making psychology readable. He has not written much recently, but his volumes *Unkahee* (Unsaid) and *Gahma Gahmi* (Hustle-Bustle) contain some of the most interesting short stories in Urdu.

The sisters Khadija Masroor and Hajira Masroor, who appeared quite prolific at the start and handled a variety of topics, have now become subdued. But, like many other contemporary short-story writers, they have already published quite a few volumes and seem to be contented with their achievement.

Ibne Insha, A. Hameed and Ibne Saeed are three young short-story writers who have consistently written during these years, bringing tales from many lands. Inspired by the rich beauty of the Far East and influenced by the Western technique of story writing, Ibne Saeed has been endeavouring to make a place for himself in the realm of Urdu fiction.

His stories often have an alien theme told in the Western matter-of-fact, almost journalistic style. He has written a great deal about war-torn Indonesia, Japan and China, the more prominent of his stories being "*Ek Decwar*" (A Wall),

dealing with post-war Japan, and "*Canton se Pahle*" (On the Eve of Canton), dealing with China during the war years.

A. Hameed has been, perhaps, the most outstanding of the second group of writers mentioned above. He has written more than the others and his collection of short stories, *Manzil*, *Manzil* (Step by Step), will probably last longer than the recent work of most of his contemporaries. Like Ibne Saeed, he has also written about foreign lands. His "*Naryal Ke Saye*" (In the Shadow of Palm Trees) is a long short story having wartime Burma as its setting.

Ashfaque Ahmad, like the more seasoned Shafiqur Rahman, dispenses a certain broad humour, now verging on meaningful satire and now changing into a mixture of wit and nonsense.

Shaukat Siddiqi has written some outstanding stories like "*Teesra Admi*" (The Third Man) and "*Ajnabi*" (The Stranger). The latter was conspicuous because of its vivid and lifelike portrayal of a tall-talking, boisterous gentleman of aristocratic descent who led a life of luxury.

Mumtaz Shirin, who has been associated with the notable Urdu literary periodical, *Naya Daur*, has been judiciously dividing her attention between fiction and criticism, and has enriched both. As a short-story writer, however, she came into prominence only after partition, and her long short stories "*Bharat Natiya*" and "*Deepak Raga*" have an original technique. In "*Deepak Raga*" the various moods of the characters are divided up into many sections, making up all together a well-knit and attractive patchwork pattern of ideas, characters and emotions. Mumtaz Shirin has recently published a volume, *Apni Nagaria*, which contains a selection of her short stories. But her style, and particularly her diction, must mature a great deal before she attains the same fluency which some of the other women writers of Urdu have.

It may be pointed out here that the contemporary short-story writers discussed above comprise a heterogeneous group representing an enormous variety of schools of thought and modes of expression. Some of them have shown pronounced

socialist leanings; others have put faith in the belief that art is above political and economic considerations. Some of them believe in telling a story and telling it well; others would always have it told with a moral. It is difficult to predict at this stage the trend that will be taken by any one writer; but judging by their recent productions, it can safely be asserted that there is little ground for the pessimism often expressed by literary critics regarding the future of the Urdu short story.

There are, of course, not many among this list of young experimenters whose work can be compared with the output or standard set by the "old guard." But it would seem to be too early yet to judge them by that standard. Many of these short-story writers have shown more promise indeed than the earlier efforts of the veterans, and some of them have already carved for themselves a niche in the history of the Urdu short story.

PROFESSOR HUMAYUN KABIR

After a long discussion on the short story in different languages, I am sure, you will not expect me to make a long speech. In any case I have already been guilty of making a fairly long one in the beginning. Without talking of any particular paper, I believe that this discussion has been of very great value. It certainly has been to me, because it has given me a little more knowledge of the work which is being done in different Indian languages. Many of the speakers, within the limitation of the time allotted to them, have given a picture of what is being done in the different Indian languages and some of the writers also gave us what in their judgment are the best stories and the best writers of short stories in India. We are grateful to them for this because it is only in this way that readers in one language can know something about writers in another.

I can mention to you a few programmes which are well on the way and which, I hope, will go some way in meeting the deficiencies and the handicaps from which writers have

suffered in the past. The Sahitya Akademi, about which we heard yesterday and again this afternoon, in one of its very first meetings, adopted a programme by which it will make a selection of 10 to 15 of what may be regarded as the best books in each Indian language. These books will be selected according to the judgment of the best critics, writers and others who know that language. When these are chosen the Akademi hopes that they will be translated into all the Indian languages so that we will have about 150 books or so, which will be common to all the Indian languages and which will form a kind of common Indian literature.

The second programme, though not quite as ambitious as the first one, I hope will be of some little help to some of our younger writers. This programme I had originally initiated more or less in my personal capacity. Now I am hoping that the Sahitya Akademi will take it over. This is a programme of publishing in English translation volumes of about 250 pages, each containing roughly about 15 to 20 stories and perhaps about 20 to 25 poems, from one of the major Indian languages. We have made some arrangements with foreign publishers. Two volumes are now being prepared, one from Bengali and the other from Kannada. Yesterday I spoke to the Chief Minister of this State in this connection. He has kindly agreed to undertake the publication of a similar volume from Tamil. In this way we have to select the best writers in the remaining languages for this purpose. In the other languages, probably there are modern writers who started writing about 1915 or 1920 or thereabouts. A selection of the works of these writers, forming a volume of about 250 pages, may be translated into English so that they may be introduced to a world audience. This will give the writers confidence and also give them a reputation outside their own country. It is a fact that even today if any of our writers who have achieved European or American renown were to write in their own languages, they would not get greater appreciation from critics in their own language. Perhaps, through this programme it may be possible to help the writers a little by introducing them to a wider public. Thus by giving them assurances and creat-

ing conditions in which writers may increase, the lot of writers can be improved.

In these fields, as I said at the beginning, there is no such thing as a steady regular development. There will be good literature only when there are good writers. I am very happy to find that practically every representative of the different languages who spoke today referred to individual writers and stated how the individual writer through his own contribution has enriched the literature of his language and through that literature has enriched Indian literature and ultimately world literature.

I hope the P.E.N., which has been doing excellent work in the past by letting us know more about one another, will continue to do so, so that we can really be proud of our Indian literature.

THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

18th April 1954

SYMPOSIUM ON "THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN FREE INDIA"

Chairman: SHRIMATI SOPHIA WADIA

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

The subject that has been assigned to me is "The Role of English in Free India." Let us recapture the linguistic position as it is today, after the passing of the Indian Constitution. It has been constitutionally decided, after considerable discussion and expression of divergent opinions, that the Hindi language written in the Devanagari script should be the national or, may I call it, the official language of India. I am deliberately using the phrase "official language" because that, in my opinion, would be the correct description of the role of Hindi in the future. It is all the more necessary to emphasize and reiterate this point because it is fairly obvious that the regional languages of India, languages like Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and many others, will not be submerged nor, I am glad to say, will the government be a party to their submergence. Indeed, it is a gratifying feature that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has made it clear in his recent utterances that there is no intention on the part of either literary or governmental circles to give any but their legitimate and important positions to the great regional languages of India, some of which possess not only antiquity but supreme excellence in many directions of literary and administrative activities.

I do not propose to say more about Hindi except to add, just by way of stimulus for discussion at this symposium, that we must be clear as to what we mean by Hindi. In the first place, Tulsidas wrote his great *Ramayana* in the Avadhi

dialect of the Hindi language. Surdas wrote his immortal work in Vrajbhasha. Mirabai gave her outpourings in the Rajasthani dialect. I am also personally aware that the Hindi spoken in Bengal or in Bihar is not the Hindi that is spoken in Delhi or in the Panjab. Therefore, if Hindi has to become the official or the national language of India, a certain amount of uniformalization and regularization of idiom and syntax have to be attempted.

I personally hold that if we all take the trouble that we should in making Sanskrit more simple and flexible and less elaborate and complicated in grammar and syntax, and eliminate or jettison some of what may be called the superfluous refinements of the language from the linguistic point of view, we can hope that Sanskrit will occupy the position that it should on the cultural map of India. That is an aspect which deserves more emphasis than it has recently received.

Speaking in another hall of this University, I have already stated what I have to say with regard to Tamil—how essential it is that in the Tamil country the place of Tamil should not be subordinated to that of any other language, and how any other language, whether it be Hindi or English, should necessarily be a secondary language. Having said this, I now come to English. I do not wish to trespass beyond the time that has been given to me by the chairman. With regard to English, let us remember two or three basic facts. The total number of books published in English is probably between five and six million. The British Museum, so far as the English portion of it is concerned, has about three million books. The Congressional Library in Washington has even more, probably four million. The sum total of that literature comprises the literature of power, the literature of feeling, the literature of experience and the literature of science and observance. No language that is not apt or appropriate for current and future uses can be regarded as satisfactory from the universal point of view, and speaking in a University, I must stress that universal point of view, namely, that no language is apt or appropriate for the uses which are likely to be demanded of it unless that language has a literature,

composite, variegated, comprehensive and universal. Let us remember that India's problem today is exactly the same problem as the one that confronted mediæval Europe when the treasures of Hebrew, Greek and Latin were thrown open to the people. They were thrown open by translators, industrious and comprehensive translators, who gave to English, to French and to Italian, all that the ancients had said, talked and thought. Now, in the wake of those translations and partly as a result of national upheavals and the uprush of the national spirit of independence and of self-vindication, there arose great poetry and great drama. Shakespeare and others were the by-products of one century of hard and careful work.

I shall narrate to you a story which I have told and re-told very often from public platforms. I visited the Osmania University Library when I went there to deliver the Convocation Address of the Osmania University in 1950. There was a very definite attempt to Urdu-ize everything. There was the idea that translations in Urdu should be completed very soon and that, pending the translations, teaching in the colleges and schools should be carried on in the regional language. But I took a slightly different view and I was strongly attacked by my good friend, the late Sir Akbar Hydari, who was then the Prime Minister of Hyderabad. Later, I went to the Translation Department and asked them how they were faring in their work. They said that the real trouble arose in respect to scientific subjects. There were weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and annual supplements and magazines and it was very difficult to keep pace with them if they had to translate all of them. They also said that by the time they translated the 10th edition of a certain book, the 11th edition was received and that it was necessary to begin a translation of that edition.

What I am leading to is not by way of discouraging the use of Hindi. But tremendous work has to be done if we are thinking of eliminating English. We can eliminate English only if we produce and have in our possession some literature adequate in content, adequate in perspective and adequate in comprehensiveness when compared to that available in

English. Until then, we cannot deprive ourselves of the cultural brotherhood of nations. We cannot blind our eyes to the great ferment or to the great movement that is taking place in regard to literature all over the world.

The role of English in free India is that of a language which is not fashionable. The reason why it is not fashionable is that during the political struggle and upheaval, which was inevitable and indispensable to India's achieving independence, we had necessarily to see to it that we did not depend upon English, a foreign language. We wanted to make ourselves independent of the dominion of English. But the English language was—and this is often forgotten—the main instrument of our new political, social and artistic ideas. It was also one of the chief instruments of that unification of which we are the heirs and the inheritors. That being so, it is no use confusing the role of English either in mediæval times or in modern times as one having political influence. Today, English is the most universally used language. Whether you go to Japan or to Germany or anywhere else, you find that a knowledge of English is compulsory. Japan and England were bitter enemies at one time. Germany and England fought with each other. Nevertheless, in all schools and colleges in most of these countries, say, France or Italy, English is not replaced by the regional language. France is proud of its own civilization and is not quite satisfied that this civilization has become outmoded. But English is still being taught in all its schools and colleges. Similarly, in the Norwegian countries, though they possess very rich literatures in their own regional languages, still in their schools and colleges English has been made compulsory. We are using English as an apt instrument for what we have to do in the fields of science, art and technology and in stimulating literary pursuits. My plea, therefore, is that whilst it is necessary to foster and cultivate the Hindi language—and while it is indispensable and indisputable that the regional languages, especially the languages which have a great past and a great future, should be regarded as fundamental units, nevertheless, Sanskrit and English will have to be the necessary complements and supplements of every type

of liberal education in India. I say this deliberately for one more reason. One of the great advantages of English is its great capacity for borrowing. Language is one of the greatest assimilating factors in the world. Take, for instance, the terms "samsara" and "karma." Many such expressions have been absorbed into English. The way in which English is spreading out and absorbing words of every language is something to be appreciated, and our languages should also do likewise.

There was a conference in Poona some time ago at which this question was discussed. Shri Balasubramanya Ayyar, who is here, has taken a great interest in this type of modernization of our languages. Our languages should not abide by the principle of "Neither a lender nor a borrower be." This principle should not apply to culture or to language. If there is to be an international vocabulary, we should not commit the mistake which Germany did. Germany started with the same kind of resentment against English, Latin and Greek—and the resentment was almost as great as the resentment that now exists in some quarters against English—with the result that just after the time of Shelley there were a number of books, scientific and literary, wherein all Greek and English were eliminated and great German compounds one and a half lines long were brought in. They introduced a 150-letter word to describe the word oxygen. It took people a long time to pronounce it. Thus, the jaw-breaking character and the comprehensive obscurity natural to the German language, accentuated by this process, made it very, very difficult for people to communicate with each other.

We have a great storehouse in Sanskrit and English words and expressions. There is no language in the world which can have equivalent, small expressions for *chetana*, *vijnana* and *buddhi*. All such minute and subtle differences in the field of philosophy are well expressed in Sanskrit. So why should we impoverish ourselves by not utilizing all this glitter of the past? Why should we also not utilize English, Greek and Latin terms which are international expressions in the spheres of science and technology? Let us not be chary of using them and making them our own. If you borrow, try to make what is

borrowed your own. Let it not be like a half-perfected garland which sits uneasily on you. In other words, I claim that the role of English in free India is that of a language whose political associations should now be forgotten. There is no reason to believe that the utilization of the English language will lead to the overwhelming of our civilization or of our politics either by the English or by the Americans or by any others. Put that jealousy and fear aside. Utilize English as an international vehicle for thought, power and aspiration. For scientific knowledge utilize international terminology and keep English in its proper and appropriate place in the educational curriculum, unless and until you have a literature which can console, satisfy and instruct you.

THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

SHRI V. G. RAMACHANDRAN

With the emergence of India as a republic, free to mould its own destiny in the comity of nations, the question has arisen whether India should develop a national language of her own and altogether exclude the use of English. There can be no doubt whatsoever as to the desirability of expanding Hindi as the common language of the country, though even on this issue some parochial-minded states such as the Tamilnad are antagonistic. They see in it a menace to the growth of Tamil, the regional language. But they forget that if Hindi is not developed, there is no other language which can take the place of English which hitherto has been the language of the court, the government, of colleges and public forums in the whole of India. These regional zealots would even like the medium of instruction in colleges and schools to be the regional language in all subjects including Mathematics, Science, etc., and not Hindi.

The question therefore arises if it is at all advisable to remove English from its old position as a language pre-eminently fitted for official and non-official purposes. In spite of

all the prejudice engendered in many States against English, it will be preposterous to do away with English which has practically been recognized as one of the languages of India. If English is erased from common use I venture to suggest that parochialism will run riot in the Indian states and instead of cohesion we shall have division. We are not patriotic enough to popularize Hindi and slowly establish it as the official language of the whole of India. Even if we achieve this, a further question arises, whether it is not advantageous to India to encourage love for the English language. It cannot be gainsaid that it is not our regional languages that brought about our freedom. It was English which took deep root in the soil of India for over a century and animated us, united us and drove us to fight the battle for freedom. Our "modern civilization" is due entirely to the English language. The Bengali, the Tamil, the Gujarati, the Telugu, the Panjabi, all met under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who by his magic spell expounded in simple English the utter need for getting rid of a foreign yoke. But for the English language, there would have been no cementing force. That is an incontrovertible truth. We have learnt English and have begun to think of it as our own. We found English good, useful and noble. We found it useful for exchanging ideas between ourselves and with peoples of other countries. We produced stalwarts such as the late V. S. Srinivasa Sastry, that good and humble servant of India who spoke English better than an Englishman. The English of Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Discovery of India* and numerous other books, of Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Devi, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Shri K. M. Munshi, the late Shri S. Satyamoorthy and a galaxy of other Indian leaders is the envy of the world. We have grown in stature in India and in the international sphere by means of that language. Let us not reduce our size or stature by disowning English, which is, at it were, part of our assimilated culture. There is no shame in such assimilation. Languages grow richer by assimilation. The most ancient language of India, Sanskrit, has enriched the various regional languages. Tamil, as it is commonly used, contains such an

admixture from other languages including English.

That deterioration creeps in once we lower our objectives is made apparent in the fetish we have exhibited in our mania for Tamilizing everything. In Madras State we pushed in, at the school stage, Tamil as the medium of instruction in science and mathematics and reduced the importance of English. What was the result? Pigmies! The students' growth was stunted as the Tamil equivalents for scientific terms were inadequate for the acquisition of knowledge which had a more natural and easier vehicle in English. The result was that we found it desirable to introduce, as suggested by the Annamalai University, an entrance course for one year after the S.S.L.C. to fit the student for a collegiate course. All this trouble arose on account of our fetish for the regional language at the expense of the acquisition of true knowledge through a convenient vehicle of thought. We are doomed if we think only of Tamil and ignore Hindi and English. We are unlikely to be in the vanguard of civilization if we retain only Hindi and ban English or allow it to rust.

Let me recall Dr. Ramaswami Aiyar's golden words, which he uttered in his convocation address at Poona in September, 1953, where he lamented the false pride displayed by parochial elements. He said: So much prejudice has been imported into the discussion of this "English" question that it is almost a matter of pride for many students and some of the teachers even to say that they do not bother themselves about the English language as it was forced on us by foreigners. As a result, the knowledge even of fairly simple English, spoken or written, is progressively deteriorating.

Then again the learned Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University referred to the danger of overemphasizing even Hindi at the expense of English. He observed: Having admitted the importance of developing our own national language for many administrative purposes and to eliminate the segregation of the so-called elite from the masses of our countrymen, we must note that the world has now contracted and that the new and rapid means of communication and the present in-

ternational status of India have necessitated continuous and lively contacts with the rest of the world, not only in trade and commerce, but in all aspects of knowledge and activity in order that the men and women of India may play their part worthily in the several directions in which they may have to proceed. It is well not to ignore or oppose the inevitable claims of a tongue which, owing to many historical and other accidents, is rapidly becoming the universal language of today and which has displaced most of its other rivals like German, Spanish and French.

It is foolish to retreat from our international contacts. We will be doing that if we ignore English, the only world language. The recognition of Indian scientists, like C. V. Raman or Jagadish Chandra Bose, or of statesmen, like Nehru or Rajaji, in the international sphere is due to English. Nehru occupies an eminent position in the world on account of his capacity to express himself in fluent, concise and perfect English. Our international contacts, our courts, our business and our administration will doubtless suffer if we erase English from India. It is not a question of how soon we should get rid of English. The question is if we should give it up at all. It has become part and parcel of our growing civilization. We may not disown or refuse to enrich our indigent national culture on that account. By all means we shall develop Tamil, Hindi and Sanskrit. But on no account shall we reduce the place of English in all essential matters where we require it. It is rather difficult to replace English. We can doubtless make Hindi our common language, a language in which we can speak or write to one another. In certain matters of lesser import in the official sphere, Hindi could be used. Hindi could also be the vehicle of expression in colleges and schools. But even there, how far Hindi can supply an intelligible vocabulary for scientific expressions in chemistry, mathematics, physics, natural sciences and so on, remains to be seen. Developing our knowledge of science in this way will hardly lead us to further discoveries. Our scientists will become regimented and stunted, unable to follow international developments which can so easily be known through English.

It may be argued that we could translate important foreign books into Hindi. But this is to ignore practical difficulties. I venture to quote again Dr. Ramaswami Aiyar's Poona convocation address: "To translate even a fraction of the millions of books extant in English in all categories of literary, artistic and scientific activity is a Herculean task. To ignore or to shut ourselves out from these contributions to knowledge would be to handicap ourselves. There are few literatures in the world which can rival the English language in the variety, comprehensiveness and many-sidedness of its output."

To deny our children the grand vehicle of thought that English provides is to deny them the great opportunities we have had for becoming acquainted with current thought. No more will we be able to send a Ramaswamy Mudaliar or persons like the late N. G. Ayyangar to international conferences. Our young men going abroad for foreign studies will be at a sore disadvantage. The universal vehicle of thought today is English and India stands to gain by retaining her resplendent standard in the knowledge of English. This has verily become a tradition with India. This All-India Writers' Conference is itself a proof of the excellence of English as a medium for the exchange of modern thought.

Any attempt to replace it by Hindi will be a dismal failure. Though we may camouflage it with a superstructure of patriotic appeal, and even though Hindi may capture the marketplace and probably also the home, it has yet to develop an adequate vocabulary for literature, science and law. Even if it does—and I am sure this cannot be achieved for at least the next 50 years—it will not be able to replace English in the sphere of international thought. We have to train our ambassadors, politicians and administrators to acquire fluency in English. Our law-courts cannot interpret modern juristic ideas except in English. At any rate, the High Courts and the Supreme Court cannot function without English for a century and more. Even at the district level, while examination of witnesses may be in the regional language or Hindi, the judgment of courts cannot but be in English as the law of the land with its complex legal terms and technicalities inherited

from English jurisprudence cannot be reduced to Hindi. Hindi has not any great literary past as Sanskrit. Hindi is yet to be developed. The Law Lexicon, Constitutional Law, the Law of Property, Contract, Specific Relief, Easements, etc., cannot be easily translated into Hindi. The numerous Law Reports which give precedents from 1880 to 1954 and which run into millions of pages cannot easily be translated into Hindi. Nor can the thousands of legal textbooks.

It is high time that we, as free Indians, realized that there is no limit to one's acquisition of knowledge. There is no limit to one's thirst to read all languages inclusive of English. It is not against the tenets of true patriotism if we retain our knowledge of English which, as we stated before, due to various historical factors has gained a permanent footing in India. Let it be understood that it is to our advantage nationally and internationally if we stick to English. Let us, who have added to our stature on account of our association with the English language, not reduce ourselves to that of frogs in a pond refusing to see the vast sea ahead. Let us shed that inferiority complex which makes us feel that a knowledge of English will make us less patriotic. We may develop Hindi as an efficient national language and also develop our regional languages for local use, but it will be suicidal if, on this score, we minimize the importance of English. English should always be retained as a compulsory language in schools and colleges. It is good also to make Hindi compulsory if only we shed our inner complex for the regional language. The growth of the latter and the love for it can in no way jeopardize the spread of Hindi. It is preposterous to say we are patriotic Indians and yet be against developing Hindi as our national language. It is still uglier when we oppose English. If both Hindi and English are taboo, the regional language alone will not provide the intellectual stimulus we need in order to evolve on the right lines.

If India should get vivisected into mad linguistic autonomous states, the federal structure of our union will disintegrate. The federal structure is kept up by a common citizenship, one Supreme Court, one all-India administrative service,

one federal Parliament, the working of all of which is to be facilitated by one common Indian language, Hindi and one international language, English. So if Hindi and English go out of the picture, then the disintegration of our federal structure will begin, and parochial and State patriotism will be ascendent.

The history of the growth of Hindi is rather chequered. The regional languages do not seem to yield to Hindi in very many states. In non-Hindi-speaking areas in north India, vigorous efforts are being made to uproot English but the effort to plant Hindi is very negligible. In the south the movement against Hindi is ominous and the craze for the regional language is almost reaching a point at which national unity is threatened. To quote Shri Munshi: English needs to continue in the foreseeable future as the optional, and at higher levels, the only language of administration. A realistic attitude to this problem consists in advocating the retention of English as the masses of India have not as yet taken to Hindi. It is interesting, in this connection, to recall a news item which appeared in *The Indian Express* and which related that a high-ranking officer of the State Government of Bombay asked the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation to carry on all urgent correspondence in English so that procedural delays in the disposal of important questions concerning local self-government might be avoided.

Having dilated so much on the need for the retention of English as the major vehicle for the expression of thought in our country, it is only appropriate to examine how the framers of our constitution visualized the matter. The relevant articles of importance in this connection are articles 343 to 351, 29 (2) and 337. Article 343 declares that Hindi in the Devanagari script should be the official language of the Union except that for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution the English language shall continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union. There is a proviso that the President of our Republic may, during the aforesaid period, by order authorize the use of Hindi in addition to English for any official purposes of the Union.

But after the said period of 15 years Parliament has been given the power to make a law for the use of English or Hindi for such purposes as may be specified by law. Article 344 casts a duty on the President to constitute commissions at the end of a period of five and ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, to inquire and make recommendations to the President as to the progressive use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union, as to the restrictions to be placed on the use of English for official purposes of the Union, as to the language to be used in the Supreme and High Courts of India and so on. These recommendations should be made by the commission with due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India and the just claims and interests of persons belonging to non-Hindi-speaking areas in regard to public services. The President may give effect to the recommendations contained in the whole or any part of the report.

In effect articles 343 and 345 assert that there need be no extinction of the English language but only restriction of its use without jeopardizing India's industrial, cultural and scientific advancement. Despite the President's regulating power, there is a clean charter extended to Parliament to authorize the use of English even after the stipulated 15 years. This is so because English has come to be regarded as almost an Indian language, without which India's further progress will be greatly jeopardized.

With respect to the States in India article 345 envisages that the State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the purposes of that State. But English will continue as the official language till the State legislates differently.

Article 346 affirms that the language of official communication between State and State and between a State and the Union will be the language which is authorized for the time being for use in the Union for official purposes.

Article 348 states that the language to be used in the Supreme Court, the High Courts, and for Acts, Bills and

so forth, shall be English until Parliament by law otherwise provides. Though Article 348 permits the Governor or Rajapramukh of a State, with the prior consent of the President, to authorize the use of Hindi or another language for official purposes, the proceedings in the High Courts are not affected thereby.

In article 351 we have the special directive which casts a duty on the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it and to enrich it by assimilating words from other languages of India inclusive of Sanskrit.

Thus we see that there is no provision in the Constitution which directs the English language to be driven out entirely; only its restriction is permitted. Its extinction is not aimed at. The President's power to direct the use of English even after 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution and further parliamentary power to retain the use of English for any length of time are guarantees for the safety of the English language in our land. Militant linguism in a State cannot liquidate English so easily when the President and Parliament have the ultimate say in the matter. This is indeed a wholesome check on democracy in the States as sometimes they may run amok in the frenzy of parochialism. The President's power is not absolute. He has to base his directions on the recommendations of a commission duly appointed by him. The provisions enable Parliament to provide for the use of English for a longer period. There is no provision for the cessation of English in a mandatory form. In respect of courts, Article 348 enables the High Courts and the Supreme Court to continue to use English until Parliament wills otherwise. There is no time limit set for this. The language of the High Courts and the Supreme Court cannot but be English. I would even urge that it should be so permanently. The laws of the land cannot be laid down in any other language. Hindi can never replace English in this sphere where technicality, procedure, substantive law and precedents require a good knowledge of English. Judgments can yield sense only if written in English. Further, our Law Reports are respected in other countries also and our growing Constitutional Law derives from and adds

to American and English Law. There is also the question of International Law. English appears to be the only vehicle for the expression of international thought. So it is well-nigh impossible to replace English in the Supreme Court and the high courts. No doubt in the district court and the munsif's court, we can give encouragement to the regional language so far as pleadings and examination of witnesses are concerned. Arguments may with difficulty be put forward by counsel in the regional language. But in complicated cases it will be a somewhat difficult task to attempt it except in English. Also, it is no use arguing in Tamil if the judgment cannot but be in English. In the mofussil courts, the judgment has to be written in English on account of the complexities of the law and legal procedure. At best, we can have a translation of these judgments but this may not serve any useful purpose if English has to be the language of the High Court.

It is our confirmed view that so far as law courts are concerned (even the Constitution does not fix a time limit) it will be unsafe to change the language of the High Courts and the Supreme Court at any time to Hindi from English. So far as mofussil courts are concerned judgments should be only in English though the language of the court may be the regional one. In the field of governmental administration offices English should not be erased at higher levels. Hindi may be utilized at lower levels. In the field of local self-government the regional language may be used at lower levels while Hindi may be used at higher levels. It is only by some such adjustment that for years to come, say even for another 25 years or more, we can advance in the development of the regional language, Hindi and English without leading to any clash between them. In the field of education, collegiate education should continue to be solely in English with Hindi next in preference. In the field of high school education both English and Hindi should be made compulsory but the regional language should be given all importance up to the secondary stage. In the high school, however, the regional language may also be included as a special optional subject for those who want to specialize in it. The importance of

Sanskrit will also have to be recognized by giving it the same status as the regional language at the high and secondary school stages. The Bombay Government's order to use Hindi as the medium of instruction in the intermediate classes in some colleges while it is not so in other colleges in that State and other States is hardly to be welcomed, since uniformity in all these matters is absolutely essential. There will be a general discrepancy in collegiate education if English is the medium in some colleges and Hindi, in some others. This will lead to difficulties and mar the future of our youths. If a rule is enunciated it should at any rate be the same within one State at least; though it is all the more desirable that it should be common to the whole of India and be applicable to all our universities. Governments run by popular ministries in a democratic society should bestow a great deal of thought upon the matter before they change the medium. In Bombay, there appears to be a vendetta against English. The ministry there has not taken care to see whether Hindi has advanced sufficiently to take the place of English. As Shri Munshi has said, the effort to displace English is misplaced unless a corresponding effort is made to raise Hindi to take its place. How the Bombay Government fared in its treatment of Anglo-Indian schools, at the hands of the Bombay High Court, is a matter of utmost concern for all of us. We feel that there is a need for exercising the utmost caution before we ban English education for our youth. In this connection let us refer to articles 29 and 337 of our Constitution. It must also be remembered that in the chapter on Fundamental Rights, article 29 protects cultural and educational rights. It appears that no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving State aid on grounds only of religion, race, caste or language. Article 30 (2) prohibits discrimination in the matter of State grants to educational institutions which cater for or are managed by linguistic or religious minorities. Article 337 affords protection to educational institutions run for the benefit of Anglo-Indians and receiving State grants. These grants will be continued for ten years but at least 40% of the annual admissions are to

be made available to members of other communities. We have referred to the above provisions (articles 29 and 337) to reveal the importance of the recent judgment of the Bombay High Court *vis-a-vis* the Bombay Government's order to English schools to prohibit admission to non-Anglo-Indian students as no Indian languages were taught there. Their lordships Justice M. C. Chagla and Justice Dixit observed that it might be that English was a foreign language and was brought in by foreigners. In a sense it might be so but English had been recognized by the Constitution and as such was entitled to protection as any other Indian language. Therefore, they had to consider whether it was constitutional to make any distinction between the English language and the other Indian languages. Their lordships felt they could not do so, and on the question whether the State can control the parent and tell him to educate his children according to the curriculum fixed by the State, their lordships thought that no parent could be prevented from choosing an Anglo-Indian school for the education of his child. The liberty to experiment with the child and choose the kind of education he wants him to have is a parent's right. This is in accord with the declaration of human rights to which India is a party. Their lordships felt that to prevent admission to non-Anglo-Indians would also contravene articles 30 (2) and 337 of the Constitution.

It must be understood that we should cease to view English as a foreign language. It has become part of us, part of our culture, part and parcel of our bedrock of progress. It will be relevant in this connection to quote Dr. A. R. Mudaliar, the Vice-Chancellor of the Travancore University, in his latest Convocation Address, delivered at Nalanda: "Today English is neither the language of any nation, nor of any imperial power. It is the language through which knowledge of modern science, technology, medicine and of various other subjects is most widely communicated. I feel that we are shutting the door against this vast treasure-house of knowledge, shutting the door against progress itself, by banning the study of English. I am convinced that in colleges an adequate knowledge of English should be considered essential so that the

scientific and professional courses of study might continue to be properly understood for many years more."

These words, coming from an elder statesman, a man of letters of international reputation, are worth their weight in gold. No less emphatic is Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, the Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University. If men of their stature, including Dr. K. M. Munshi and Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, feel that English should be fostered rather than buried, it is a tragedy that in democratic India narrow-minded politicians who manage to get into official positions want to show off their patriotism by decrying English. In this complex, vast and varied world your regional language will not take you further than your doorstep or the market place. Education is not concerned with political propaganda. It is the life-breath of the nation, the beacon of progress and the propeller of current and future thought.

Our educational problems should be viewed only from the point of view of national advancement on the cultural and economic planes. They should never be viewed from a narrow angle by warring political parties who vie with one another in pushing forward dubious schemes of national advancement. It is to prevent this type of political manœuvring at the State level that the President and the Parliament are given the sole power to guide the nation as to the desirability of continuing English after the stipulated 15 years. State governments, manned by politicians of lesser vision, cannot under the Constitution abrogate English from the higher levels of administration without the consent of the President. High Courts, the Supreme Court and inter-State communications are also outside their jurisdiction. This is all to the good. If English goes, the strength of the federal centre will be dangerously reduced by the militant linguism of the States.

In the ultimate analysis Parliament can be influenced in favour of the retention of English only by the strength of informed public opinion, which must assert itself. It is therefore the duty of all publicists, educationists and administrators to focus public attention on the desirability of retaining

English in courts, colleges and at higher levels of administration. To this end the English language must be taught as a compulsory subject in schools and colleges. If public opinion is not strong enough it is likely that members of Parliament will be swayed by other forces to do away with English as a token of patriotic fervour, however misplaced such zeal may be.

It is doubly incumbent on a vigilant public, on publicists, educationists and men of responsibility to sound a clarion call to Parliament to retain English in its present position in the interests of our national progress. May I suggest that this august assembly of men of letters from all over India give its blessings to the retention of English for all time in our country in the interest of our national advancement and national culture? I thank you all for your extreme kindness in giving me an opportunity to read this paper at this conference on a subject which is of such vital importance to the future of India.

NO FAREWELL TO ENGLISH

DR. M. HAFIZ SYED

The proposal for the substitution of an Indian language for English as the medium of instruction in the Indian universities deserves our serious consideration. It is a change of such momentous importance and far-reaching results that it requires the most careful consideration at the hands of leaders and educationists.

Educational reformers have from time to time advocated the use of the mother tongue in teaching pupils in schools and colleges. But the use of an Indian language as a medium of instruction in the secondary and higher stages of education in our country is a problem that bristles with difficulties. These difficulties have so far been obstacles to the introduction of our languages in our colleges. Some of the chief difficulties are:—

1. Lack of suitable textbooks in Indian languages in all branches of knowledge, both scientific and humanistic. The immediate introduction of an Indian language as the sole medium of instruction in our universities, therefore, spells disaster.

2. Dearth of professors thoroughly qualified to teach through the medium of an Indian language, as all of them have received their education through the medium of English.

3. The capacity of Indian languages as vehicles of thought and expression is surely limited at the present time. It will be fairly long before any of them is sufficiently developed and made a fit instrument for the expression of advanced scientific and philosophical thought. We have been used to English for at least 150 years. It is rather difficult to renounce it, and become efficient at once in another language.

It is admitted on all sides that English is a very comprehensive language and it is in use all over the world. A knowledge of English is the master key to the literary and scientific treasures of the world. It is the *lingua franca* of educated India and has as such exerted a unifying and cementing influence by bringing people of various communities and provinces of India on a common social, political, educational and religious platform. But for English, Indians hailing from the different provinces of this vast subcontinent would not have known and understood each other so well. I have travelled far and wide in different parts of India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Calcutta to Kashmir, and I must frankly confess that, but for the little knowledge of English I have, I would not have been able to get along or know my own countrymen. Not only here but also during my visit to Europe I have found English most helpful. The day is far distant when Indians of various provinces will agree to use a common Hindustani language as a means of communication among themselves.

Efforts are being made to bring our university education in line with modern life. The alumni of our universities ought to be able to look forward confidently to a suitable career at

the end of their college life. It is admitted on all sides that college education needs to be brought into closer relationship with the stern realities of life. For law, commerce and international affairs we have to depend on English, without a practical knowledge of which we shall be compelled to close various avenues of livelihood open to us.

Most of our universities draw pupils from various regions and communities speaking diverse languages. If one Indian language is adopted as a medium of instruction, how will pupils speaking other languages be able to follow lectures? In the United Provinces only Urdu and Hindi are current and there are many common factors between the two. But what would be the fate of universities established in Madras and Bombay States where not less than four languages are spoken? Anglo-Indians and Goans, for instance, speak English. The Parsis and Gujaratis speak Gujarati, the Muslims Urdu, the Jews Hebrew, the South Indians Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, the Bengalis Bengali and Oriya. The introduction of the English language as a medium of instruction in these institutions has proved to be a real boon in as much as it has helped us to imbibe Western culture and has brought us together in a common bond.

Is this achievement insignificant? Would it be wise to discard English all at once and deprive ourselves of a cultural heritage which has broadened our minds and deepened our sympathies?

We should remember that English is "the richest and most flexible vehicle of expression among living tongues" and is understood all over the world.

Books on research conducted in any field and published in an Indian language will have a very limited circulation outside India. If English were discarded European and American scholars would be prevented from participating in and appreciating the research work done in Indian universities. Collaboration among Indian universities, which exists at the present time, will be rendered extremely difficult, if not impossible, by the introduction of Indian languages as the

mediums of instruction. The latter will also act as a check on the inter-university migration of students and co-operation among professors. All this, for obvious reasons, will not make for national unity.

My object in emphasizing the need and utility of English in promoting cultural and scientific development in our country is to make us feel and realize the fact that an international language like English brings us in line with other civilized nations of the world and helps us to carry on international relations with them. I do not wish to minimize the educational advantages of using our mother tongue as the medium of instruction. What I do say is this: we must try our utmost to develop and enrich our Indian languages for some time yet to come before we introduce them as mediums of instruction.

Those who wish to pursue higher studies, carry on research work and be in touch with the achievements of scholars of other progressive countries, enter diplomatic service, occupy the highest official positions in the central government, travel abroad as naval, military and aviation officers—to quote only a few functions—cannot possibly do without having a good working knowledge of English or some other European language, in addition to the mother tongue employed as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges.

India has to choose one common language, be it English or Hindi, which may serve as a link between the central and the provincial governments and the outside world. As we have acquired a fair amount of familiarity with English and have become conversant with its usage, it will be unwise on our part to neglect or discard it altogether. It has been asserted by some that English is one of the most difficult languages of the world and we Indians have failed to acquire it as well as we should. Therefore, we are advised to give up English altogether and to acquire a fuller command over the language and literature to which we are born. One of the chief reasons why educated Indians have not become as efficient in English as they should be, in spite of the fact that

they learn it for not less than 12 to 14 years, is that it is badly taught in schools and later on in some of the colleges.

Our educational system is so badly planned that it results in waste of time and energy. The various examinations which need eight or ten years' study to get through could be passed in half the time, provided proper methods of instruction were introduced.

With the proposed change over from English to Indian languages as mediums of instruction in schools and colleges what would be the future of English in our educational life? Even if the imposition of English as the medium of instruction in all subjects has stunted our growth in several respects and prevented the spread of knowledge from the intelligentsia to the masses, it must be admitted that the nation's political and national regeneration during the last half a century and more is largely the direct consequence of the impact of Western knowledge through the medium of English on our somewhat static and petrified civilization. But what about the future? Should English be taught in our schools and colleges as a compulsory secondary language to our boys or should it be relegated to the position of an optional language studied by those drawn to it by its cultural value or because of their aspiration to pursue higher studies in foreign countries?

In the light of these observations my contention is that though we have bidden farewell to English rule in India and the English people in general, we should not bid farewell to the English language altogether. In our own interests we must retain the study of English in some form or other and continue drawing our cultural and scientific inspiration through this almost universal language. We must free our minds of all prejudices against any language or learning, irrespective of whether it is spoken by a friend or a foe. Linguistic and literary topics should be judged on their own merits in an impersonal, unimpassioned manner.

THE BASIC PATTERN OF OUR LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

DR. INDRA SEN

Often when arguments fail to give a clear guidance on a confused issue, an examination of the attitudes involved greatly assists in its clarification.

In the past we took to English for its utility and necessity, but in a good measure for its prestige, too, and identified ourselves with it. The Indian languages were at that time looked down upon and we disowned them.

These attitudes evidently require to be corrected under the present altered circumstances.

The right attitude towards English today would be, perhaps, its correct evaluation as an important international language, as a medium for acquiring a knowledge of modern science, technology and trends in art and culture and as an instrument for making a national contribution to the same.

Indian languages must occupy their rightful place in our national life and contribute to its efficient working and future progress.

It is fully recognized now that we need to study three languages: first, the mother tongue or the regional language, then the national language and, last, an international language, in the order of the importance they should enjoy. Sanskrit should be included for its cultural traditions to reinforce the regional and national languages and should be included as their basis, support and means of enrichment. Other foreign languages may be learnt instead of or in addition to English.

Those whose regional language also happens to be the national should study another Indian language. This will help the growth of the national language, act as a corrective to self-sufficiency and exclusiveness in Hindi-speaking regions and help to unify the country as a whole.

Besides this, Hindi-speaking people have to acknowledge the fact that the recognition of Hindi as a national language imposes on them the duty to make the language continuously more efficient. They must be conscious of its inadequacies and of their own responsibility for its evolution and growth.

We need to adopt a sane, healthy attitude to the problem of language and to shed all our prejudices in that direction.

SHRI K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

I belong to the generation which used to reply when asked about any study that English is the best language. Now I come to a period of life when in the matter of schooling I would say that my first language is Tamil, next comes Hindi or Sanskrit and then English. I would, first of all, say that Hindi must be regarded as a state language and not as a national language. When Hindi is able to assimilate the best words of the other Indian languages and world languages and when a great literature is born in Hindi, then Hindi will be studied all over India without any official pressure or any advice. Then it will become the national language. So far as the present time is concerned, with regard to education in high schools and colleges, I am definitely of opinion that the regional language should be the medium of instruction for purposes of qualification and examination.

As far as English is concerned, I want to state that English is a world language and it must be studied; it has the same status as French or German or any other modern language. I want that English should continue to be studied as a compulsory subject and should be the medium of instruction in colleges for a longer time and not only up to the period of time envisaged in the Constitution. First of all, it is the language of science and technology and it has a great literature, some forms of which we require for our own regional languages. Such literary forms have not achieved a high degree of success in any of the Indian languages. So we must study

the English language for many more years to come. I am of opinion that in the Tamil area, Tamil should be the first language, Hindi should come next, then Sanskrit and lastly English.

DR. RAM KUMAR VARMA

After the attainment of independence, Hindi has been laid down as the official or national language of India. So it is the sacred responsibility of all people to develop the Hindi language and its literature. For this purpose, I feel, we have to work in collaboration with the non-Hindi-speaking people. I want to make it perfectly clear that while the Hindi-speaking people will develop their language in the future, they have not the least idea of imposing Hindi on the people living in non-Hindi-speaking areas. Other languages in this country are equally sacred. When we attained independence, we realized the importance of Hindi and its suitability for becoming the national language in the truest sense of the word. Hindi shall not be the national language unless it is able to express everything that is expressed in the other languages of the country. Hence, it is the duty of the people speaking languages other than Hindi to contribute to and enrich the national language.

Since independence, the Hindi-speaking people have realized the responsibility of developing Hindi in various ways. It is not only in the field of art that Hindi is being developed but also in the field of poetry and many other useful fields. The first thing that we have to do is to compile a very good dictionary of Hindi which will comprise not only Hindi words but also such words in other languages as can be used in Hindi.

A Committee has been formed to reform the Hindi script. In spite of the fact that we can write Hindi in its usual script, we want to retain the individuality of the Devanagari script.

The question of writing books on scientific subjects brings in the question of the medium of instruction. We insist that the medium of instruction in schools and colleges should be the mother tongue. But since we have laid down that the national language should be Hindi, we have been thinking that the medium of instruction should be the federal language or Hindi. You should remember that not only in the fields of art but in the field of science as well we are producing useful standard books fit to be used as textbooks in the universities. But the problem is that the people who do not speak Hindi probably do not agree to read Hindi, or probably do not devote to it as much attention as they should. I do not question the love for the mother tongue. The mother tongue must be placed at the top. But, at the same time, there should be a sentiment for developing and cultivating a taste for Hindi.

Implore the people who do not speak Hindi not to have any misconception regarding the position of Hindi *vis-a-vis* other languages and to read Hindi and contribute their mite to the development of the national language. That is what Hindi writers are doing. They are translating the best works from other languages into Hindi. I do realize that there is a vast literature in Tamil which may well be translated into Hindi. We have established in the Allahabad University a diploma course whereby one has to attain proficiency in one of the languages of South India in order to receive the diploma. I hope that in the ten years prescribed in the Constitution within which we have to develop Hindi as the national language, other people who have not learnt Hindi will learn it and contribute towards making Hindi the national language of India.

SHRIMATI SOPHIA WADIA

Most of the speakers who participated in this discussion wanted that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction as that is the closest and most intimate language of the people concerned. They also wanted that Hindi should

be the *lingua franca* of India and favoured the retention of English, which is undoubtedly an international language. It cannot be compared, at the present time, either with the Indian languages or for that matter with even French, Russian or German. It is an international language and the only language which will serve as an international medium for the communication of ideas. Therefore we must retain English so that it can serve as a means of communication with the rest of the world.

ASSAMESE LITERATURE (1948-53)**DR. B. K. BARUA**

The year 1948 was a landmark in the annals of Assam. That year saw the fulfilment of the long cherished desire of the Assamese people to establish the University of Gauhati as a full-fledged teaching and affiliating university. In the very year of its inception, it organized the teaching of various subjects for post-graduate courses, including the Assamese language and literature. The Shillong-Gauhati Station of All India Radio was also set up during this year. The newly started publishing organization, Ramdhenu Ltd., and the widening of the scope of Dutta Barroah and Co., another publishing firm connected with the publishing of early Assamese manuscripts, marked further steps in the literary and cultural progress of the State.

The newly formed post-graduate Department of Assamese of the Gauhati University under Professor Banikanta Kakati (d. 1952) immediately occupied itself with study and research in Assamese literature, both ancient and modern. Dr. Kakati served for many years as a professor of English and got a doctorate from the University of Calcutta for his scientific treatise, *Assamese, Its Formation and Development* (1941). As a man of wide knowledge, interest and scholarship, Kakati was regarded as one of the most brilliant scholars of the province. His pen was as keen and hard as his intellect. In his earlier years he wrote a series of critical studies in early and modern Assamese literature. After accepting the professorship of Assamese at the university he started his literary career anew and produced a number of thoughtful essays. His greatest contribution lay in the zeal he inspired in the younger teachers for the study of and research into Assamese history, literature and culture.

Another teacher of the department, Dr. B. K. Barua, writes mostly on cultural and literary subjects. His work on early Assamese prose literature (*Assamiya Katha Sahitya*,

1950) is a very erudite production. The book discusses the growth and development of Assamese prose from the 16th century to the beginning of the 18th century. Dr. Barua has brought out critical editions of the 300-year-old *Manasa* songs (*Manasa Kavya*, 1951) connected with the worship of the snake-goddess in Assam, and *Mahamoha Kavya*, the rendering of the allegorical Sanskrit drama *Prabhodha Candrodaya* in Assamese poetic form by Ramananda Dvija. Maheswar Neog, another university teacher, published in 1949 his *Sri Sankardeva* (1949), a brilliant biography of Sankardeva, the 16th-century saint-poet of Assam. He also edited *Vangshi Gopal Charitra*, the biography of a Vaisnavite saint. Round about this time Satyendranath Sarma published a new edition of a 16th-century poem entitled *Usa Parinaya*. Shri Sarma contributed a few neatly written essays on individual authors, and Professor Upendra Chandra Lekharu edited *Katha Guru Charitra*, a voluminous collection of biographies of the Vaisnavite saints of Assam written in the 17th century.

During the period under review, Dr. Bhuyan published *Kowar Bidroh* (1949) and *Buranjir Bani* (1951), both collections of essays on historical subjects written in a crisp and vivid style and well-documented. Shri Benudhar Sarma, whose historical articles appeared in book form under the title *Durbin*, wrote a most interesting biography six years ago, entitled *Maniram Devan*. It concerns an 18th-century leader of the province and it involved considerable research.

The output of the personal essay is gradually increasing. Ramdhenu Ltd., through its daily newspaper *Natun Assamiya*, has been encouraging this type of work in its Sunday editions. Mostly the work of young artists, these essays do not show perfection in either form or substance. The Shillong-Gauhati Station of All India Radio has been instrumental in producing informative essays on science, the arts and letters. Unfortunately most of these essays lack form and literary embellishment.

There is no "professional stage" in the State though most of the towns and important village centres have amateur theatres which present plays throughout the year at regular

intervals. Atul Chandra Hazarika, who has already written about a dozen mythological plays, still continues to write both on mythological and historical subjects. The interest of Hazarika's plays centres mostly in the story, as he has not much aptitude for characterization and his dialogues lack variety. The well-known playwright Jyoti Prasad Agrawala's latest play, *Labhita*, written against the background of the war, deals with a heroine who has been socially uprooted and who after winning honours on several military duties, dies as a nurse fighting to save the country from foreign rule. Since Independence mythological plays have been replaced by historical dramas with a patriotic bias. Prabin Phookan's *Maniram Dewan* and Chandrakantha Phookan's *Piyali Phookan* hold up to the public the inspiring example of two 19th-century patriots who attempted to drive out the British. The plays are well written, the characterization sharp and clear, the dialogue crisp and the plots full of suspense. Surendranath Saikia's *Kusal Kowar*, a drama dealing with one of the martyrs of the August 1942 "Quit India" movement, has achieved considerable success, while Prabin Phookan's *Kal Parinaya* and Sarada Bardalai's *Magribur Ajan*, a play dealing with Hindu-Muslim relations, are written in a highly realistic manner.

The one-act play is very old. We have them in the *ankiyata-nats* of the 16th-century Vaisnavite poets. In modern times Lakshmidhar Sarma has been the first to experiment with this form. The radio has also given a fillip to the development of the one-act play through its regular programmes and occasional drama festivals.

Fiction, in the form of novels, has been revitalized during the last few years. A clearer understanding of life, an awareness of character as well as the courage to express convictions more freely, have tended to lend a slightly firmer tone than was hitherto the case to this form of literature. Instead of weaving the narrative around unconvincing, flat, imaginary characters, the writer is making an attempt to produce men and women who react to ideas, a fact which lends the novel philosophical significance. For example, Mathura Deka's

Humuniyah (Sighs) has as its motif the unnecessarily tragic suffering that is sometimes the lot of man. Praphulladatta Goswami's *Keca Patar Kapani* (Quivering Foliage) attempts to delineate the emotional, economic and ideological unrest of young people. Radhika Mohan Goswami's *Caknaiya* (The Vortex) is a detailed record of the failure of a well-meaning young man to adjust himself to society. Navakanta Barua's *Kapili Pariya Sadhu* is a different type of novel. Here the writer has depicted the meanderings of the river Kapili, and the hopes and despair the river raises in the heart of the people dwelling on its banks. In this connection mention may be made of *Jivanar Batat*, a novel dealing with the rural life of Assam, which has been enlarged and re-published. Among other works, Jogesh Das's *Sahari Pai*, Hitesh Dekha's *Ajir Manuh*, Adyanath Sarma's *Jiwanar Timi Adhyaya*, Ghana-kanta Gogoi's *Sonar Nangal*, Govinda Mahanta's *Krsakar Nati* are outstanding. Fiction of a different kind, the criminal novel, has come into its own in the hands of Kumudeswar Barthakur and Premanarayan Datta.

The last few years have been most fruitful in the production of short stories, popularized by the various magazines and journals which publish them. The only claim these short stories possess to being termed so is their brevity. The collections of stories recently published by Rama Das (*Rama-dashar Srestha Galpa*), Umakanta Sarma (*Ghuraniya Prithibir Beka Path*), Trailokyanath Goswami (*Aruna* and *Mari-cika*) and Beena Barua (*Aghoni Bai* and *Pat Paribartan*) mostly depict the state of a society in transition. In the field of humour, the only collection worth mentioning is Lakshminath Phookan's *Ophaidang* (1952), which depicts many comic aspects of middle-class life. *Ejani Natun Chowali* and *Rangagara* are ably written by Malik, dealing with the social and economic problems of present-day society. This writer, who has achieved considerable distinction, tends to stress character rather than events. Social justice does not lack champions, while the analysis of conscious and unconscious mental processes has found its adherents in Jogesh Das, Saurabh Chaliha and a few other young writers.

Socialist and Marxist doctrines have influenced many of our younger poets and writers. Some have also been bewitched by the techniques employed by European symbolists and Eliot. The year 1946 saw the publication of an anthology, entitled *Adhunik Asamiya Kabita*, in which several young poets owing allegiance to Marxist thought gave vent to their convictions. Capitalist exploitation, class conflict and the need for a quick change in the order of things were consistently referred to, and not only the content but the form of poetry was also new to Assamese literature. Older poetic forms and techniques were abandoned and gave way to free verse. The imagery was new and where traditional patterns were employed they were interpreted in an unusual way. Among these "progressive writers" Hem Barua may be said to have been the first to introduce symbolic poetry into Assamese literature. Hem Barua's imagery is original, the technique abrupt and uncommon. Navakanta Barua has also experimented with this form. In *He Aranya He Mahanagar* (1950) he follows the incomprehensibles and introduces a new poetic technique and strews the work with complicated images. Hari Barakakati, Birendranath Bhattacharyya and Birendranath Barkatoki are other new writers whose merits still await assessment, while, among the survivors of the old generation, Jatindranath Dowera's voice is scarcely heard. When audible it has the same romantic note of older days. Nalinibala Devi still continues to write mystic, devotional and patriotic verse. Ambikagiri Roy Chawdhury, who has distinguished himself as a poet, singer, composer, journalist, political agitator and patriot, has recently produced poems which have vigour and conviction. In a recent poem, "I am a Rebel, I am an Anarchist," published in the Assamese periodical *Ramadhenu*, the sexagenarian calls himself a rebel and an anarchist and enumerates those plague-spots of life and society which he would like to annihilate if he could.

A word remains to be said about the innovations which have been introduced into children's poetry in the form of nonsense verse. Jyotiprasad Agrawala and Navakanta Barua have been pioneers in this direction and were ably assisted by

Rang-ghar, the children's magazine, now defunct, which published the new type of verse.

The years between 1948-53 have been a period of promise and hope for Assamese literature. Achievements during these years in the different fields of literature have been by no means negligible. With every factor favouring further developments, one feels certain that Assamese literature has a brilliant future and will contribute substantially to the cultural greatness of our country.

AN ACCOUNT OF BENGALI LITERATURE (1948-53)

SHRI JOGENDRANATH GUPTA

I propose to give a short account of Bengali literature during the period under review. It has developed in different spheres, such as that of the short story, the novel, the essay and the biography. It reflects at the present moment the multifarious tendencies that can be found in world literature and is served by a growing number of able men and women.

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee opened a new field in literature by taking up the cause of the poor and depressed people and the social problems of the middle classes—their hardships and suffering in the struggle for existence. He portrayed their social conditions in true and vivid colours and drew realistic pictures of the social life of his day. Most writers of novels and short stories have tried their best to follow in the footsteps of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore.

After World War II and the Partition of India—especially of Bengal—we notice a great change in our society. The refugee problem, the economic and social conditions of the uprooted and other attendant circumstances have brought about important social changes and have destroyed somewhat the old conservative structure on which society rested. Writers of fiction have dealt with the new phenomenon in a manner befitting this period of transition. Bengali novelists seem to rely more upon their acquaintance with actual facts than upon

their imagination for what they write. Thus the element of realism is strengthened. Out of nothing, nothing can be created. Some plastic power is required, however great may be the material at hand.

During the period under review several notable writers have appeared. The best among them are Achintya Sen, whose novels give a sensitive portrayal of diverse social sections, Annada Sankar Ray, the brilliant prose writer, Ashapurna Devi, Bibhuti Mukherjee, Balaichand Mukherjee, Bani Ray, the notable poetess and novelist, the late Bibhuti Banerjee, Buddhadeva Bose, Dhurjati Mukherjee, Gajen Mitter, "Jaya-bar" (Binoy Mukherjee), Manik Banerjee, Manoj Bose, Nani Bhaumick, Narayan Ganguli, Narendra Mitter, Pramatha Bisi, Premendra Mitter, Ramesh Sen, Sailaja Mukherjee, Samarendra Bose, Saroj Roy Choudhury, Sarabindu Banerjee, Satinath Bhaduri, Subodh Ghosh, Subodh Bose, Tarasankar Banerjee, Prativa Bose, Upen Ganguli and others. Bengali writers in the 40's developed an intense political and social consciousness which has coloured much of the literary output of the period. Mental attitudes, moral ideals, spiritual values and æsthetic appreciation changed almost fundamentally.

Some modern writers have consciously adopted or imitated Western ideas and techniques, which has resulted in an emphasis on the psychological and sexual elements in their work. Very few of these have any aspirational trend or deal with the expression of the spiritual in man. Fiction dealing with sex enjoys wide popularity but is justly condemned by discriminating literary critics.

Amongst essayists and critics Dr. Srikumar Banerjee, Dr. Subodh Sen Gupta, Gopal Haldar, Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Dr. Sasibhusan Das Gupta, Kavisekhar Kalidas Roy and Pramatha Bisi are outstanding. They have written appreciations of Bengali novels and literature in general and dealt especially with Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra. In one of his poems, entitled "*Sata Barsha Pare*," Rabindranath asks, "A hundred years later who will be the favourite poets of the day?" Up to now no poet has appeared who can be compared to that great bard.

Among the poets who display progressive leanings are Bisnu De, who has a penchant for formal expression, B. Bose, whose early literary iconoclasm has terminated in a worship of Tagore, Ajit Dutt, Jagannath Chakravarty, Jivananda Das, Premendra Mitter, Amiya Chakravarty, Dilip Roy, Samar Bose, Sanjib Bhattacharyya, Sudhin Dutt and others, most of whom unfortunately lack the fire and vision which distinguish a first-rate poet. One feels, however, the "magic of the language, in which the meaning melts into the sound and the words are mixed with the music which they make." An anthology of modern poets named *Adhunik Kavita* was published in 1953 by the eminent publishers, M. C. Sarkar and Sons, and edited by Buddhadeva Bose.

Juvenile literature in Bengal is progressing very rapidly. Let me quote here the remarks of an eminent English writer who observes:—

As I have travelled round India and heard about the paucity of vernacular literature, especially the dearth of books for children, I have been sure that Bengal stands high, perhaps highest of all, among the provinces of India in this respect. Go to any good book-seller and ask for suitable Bengali books for a school library and you will be overwhelmed by the quantity available. There are endless books of tales for small children, there are biographies, there are certain translations of English standard books of travel and adventure. There are a goodly number of children's magazines. There are collected works of standard Bengali writers, mostly novels of social life suitable for seniors. There is all the wealth of literature, prose and verse, which had recently qualified Bengal for what may well be called a "Literary Renaissance."

Special reference should be made to the *Sishu Bharati* (Children's Encyclopædia) edited by Jogendranath Gupta and completed in 10 volumes, 4,000 pages in all and with copious illustrations. This is a magnificent and unique endeavour, and about a hundred scientists have co-operated in preparing the science articles and notes. Almost every branch of Science, Literature, Anthropology, History, Astronomy, Geology, Modern Physics, Chemistry, and Geography has been covered.*

Writers who have distinguished themselves in this field include Akhil Neogi, Lila Mazumdar, Sunirmal Bose, Nripen

* *Memoranda for Unesco* (Indian Science Congress Association, Calcutta. 1951), pp. 31-32.

Chatterjee, Kartic Das Gupta, Dharendra Dhar, Khagen Mitter (editor of *Kisore*—a children's daily now defunct), Nihar Gupta, Khitindra Bhattacharyya, Naren Dev and others.

In the field of historical writing the names of Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray, Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharyya, Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. Anil Banerjee, are prominent. Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray's *Banglir Itihash*; *Adiparva*, *Palasir Yuddha* by Shri Tapanmohan Chatterjee; *Huglir Itihash* by Sudhir Mitter; and *Banglar Saraswat Abadan* of Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharyya (a Rabindra Prize winner), deserve special mention.

Bengal has lost her former glory both in the production and creation of drama. At one time there were five theatres in Calcutta, now the "Star" flourishes in solitary splendour. Amongst those whose dramas were published in the period under review may be mentioned Sachin Sen Gupta, Mahendra Gupta, Manmatha Ray, Devnarayan Gupta, Bidhayak Bhattacharya, Tarak Mukherjee, Dijen Banerjee and Salil Sen Gupta. Owing to the great popularity of the screen, the stage seems to be rapidly on the decline. But the people's theatre is making gallant attempts to introduce realistic plays and popularize them in Bengal. The amateur dramatic groups of Santiniketan and Ganaratya Sangha have done much for the Bengali stage, while the I.P.T.A. has striven valiantly for its slogan "art for the people." With its many branches and performances, the I.P.T.A. is striking its roots deep, but its artistic lead is not as sure as in the past. Amongst playwrights and actors of this period, we may mention here Tripti Mitter, Kali Ghosh, the late Monoranjan Bhattacharyya and Sabita Dutta.

A number of translations have appeared of prominent works such as Shri Rajagopalachari's Tamil *Mahabharata*, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*, *Mission with Mountbatten*, *Glimpses of World History*, *Atmcharit*, the autobiography of Nehru, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad's *India Divided*, as well as of a large number of famous novels both ancient and modern.

The recently published *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* by "Parasuram" (Rajsekhar Bose) are notable events in our literary history, while Achintya Sen's *Parampurus Ramakrishna*, the life and teachings of the great saint, has captured the imagination of the masses and has had the largest sale in the history of Bengali literature, a million copies having been sold this year alone. The author displays great devotion and profound religious feeling in this book as well as in *Param Prakriti*, which has also become a best-seller. Other books which deserve fame include *Chalaman Jiwan* by Pabitra Ganguli, *Atma Smriti* by Sajani Das, Jogen Gupta's *Banger Prachin Kavi*, *Banger Mahila Kavi*, *Sadhak Kavi Ramprasad*, and Vivekananda Mukherjee's *Biplabi Nayak*.

Amongst books on travel, Ranichanda's *Purnakumbha* created a sensation and secured the "Ravindra Puraskar," an enviable literary trophy, early this year. Nandalal Bose's *Silpakatha* and *Rupabali* and Rabindranath Tagore's *Chitra* are also important contributions to Bengali literature.

GUJARATI LITERATURE SINCE INDEPENDENCE

PROFESSOR V. R. TRIVEDI

The joy and enthusiasm of independence was not unmixed with a deep sense of sorrow and frustration. The country was partitioned and the forces of partition resulted in carnage on the very eve of independence. A foreign invasion could not have wrought such woe and damage, spiritual and economic. Men, women and children were killed; women were ravished and dragged away; and thousands of families were uprooted from their native soil. Freedom and security were imperilled. But Pandit Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel rose to supreme heights and saved the country from what might have been a great calamity in our history. They handled the problems of defence and the migration of population with firmness and sagacity. And the nation realized that it was really free.

Another catastrophe occurred when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, but again the statesmanship of Nehru and Patel led the country out of fire and a tragedy of the proportions of a civil revolt was averted.

On the positive side, the country was consolidated into one political unit, the "native states" merging into the wider and greater unity. All schemes and plans for social and economic reconstruction could now be contemplated and implemented on a nation-wide scale. Similarly, plans for education, research, scientific training and training the youth for the three wings of the defence army were executed with an eye to the welfare of the country as a whole. Untouchability was legally abolished. In the councils of nations the stature of India rose to unexpected heights because India pursued a dynamic policy of neutrality, supported the cause of freedom everywhere and refused to join either of the "power blocs."

In a recent speech Shri K. M. Munshi has neatly summarized the progress made by the country during these years. He said that the food crisis was over, controls were almost lifted, a rapid transformation was taking place on the land owing to the community projects, the Government had evolved a technique of fighting scarcity on a thorough basis, subversive activities were under control, science laboratories had sprung up in large numbers, far-reaching social legislation was being enacted, large-scale industries had been established, new experiments in basic education were being tried out and higher education was being remodelled to suit new conditions. A vast wave of enthusiasm for building the country was in evidence.

The feeling of frustration and tension, however, has not completely disappeared. The Kashmir issue hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles and has been worsened by the Pak-American military pact. Linguistic parochialism is becoming aggressive and fanatical. The peasant and the labourer have not attained the blessings they thought they had been promised. The well-to-do, who also represent the vested interests, are not defiant, but they are inwardly most critical of governmental policy. The presence of corruption

and nepotism cannot be denied. And the Congress, being in an unshakable position, is becoming self-righteous and immobile. The pattern of life that is in store for the present generation appears precarious, if not depressing. Perhaps it is the same the world over, since peace is in jeopardy everywhere.

Luckily forces within and outside the Congress have exerted a salutary influence on the government as well as the people. Shri K. G. Mashruwala, the great interpreter of the Gandhian ideology, examined in the pages of the *Harijan* every public question in a dispassionate way. Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan campaign has been very fruitful. And in Western India, Kedarnathji and Ravishanker Maharaj continue their efforts for achieving greater purity in social behaviour and dealings with missionary zeal. All this has checked the tidal wave of Communism. It might completely absorb its shock and prepare the country for peaceful reconstruction.

During the period under review, Gujarat has lost many heroes, social workers and men of letters—Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and Thakkar Bapa among the nation-builders; Nanalal, Thakore, Khabardar, Meghani, Mashruwala and Chandrashanker Shukla among men of letters and thinkers; Durgashankar Shastri and Ramlal Modi among antiquarians and scholars. It appears as if the age of Nanalal and Gandhi is over. Both had launched a renascent movement; Nanalal stimulated the Sanskrit revival and synthetical approach to life; Gandhiji reflected a universality of outlook and simplicity and directness in style; the one showed the poetical charm of which our language is capable, the other its adequacy for persuasive writing.

The establishment of two Universities in Gujarat, the Gujarat University in 1950 and the City University of Baroda in 1949, has been a major event in the intellectual life of the people. The regional culture of Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch has now a centre and a focus, and Gujarati as a language is expected to prosper. Already the Gujarat University has taken steps to introduce by stages Gujarati as the medium of instruction in the colleges. The dawn of great academic and intellectual life is indicated by clusters of new

colleges in the whole of Gujarat. Besides the arts colleges, institutes for instruction and research in science, agriculture, medicine, commerce and technology, have been set up. It is too early to claim any distinct achievement but the necessary environment has been provided for those possessing either enthusiasm or aspiration for letters. An understanding of the problems of the masses is entering more and more into our sphere of education. Basic education, despite its drawbacks and failings, is an attempt to interest the student in manual work and to arrest the drift to urban ways of living. The establishment of the Lokabharati (People's University) in Saurashtra by Nanabhai Bhatta and Manubhai Pancholi is very significant as it aims to impart all education, including the highest, with this central democratic objective.

Dr. Bhogilal Sandesara of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda is a very promising scholar of Prakrit and old Gujarati. His study of Vastupala and his literary circle is illuminating. Of the older scholars Shri Ramanarayan Pathak has formulated afresh new principles for the proper understanding of traditional metres (*deshis*). The research theses of some graduates merit notice. Dr. P. N. Vakil and Dr. Dhirubhai Thakar have produced excellent studies in Premananda and Manilal, respectively. Dr. Ratan Marshall has written a history of Gujarati journalism, and Dr. R. I. Patel, a history of the Gujarati novel. Both show able scholarship. Professor K. B. Vyas, Professor K. K. Shastri, Shri Umashankar Joshi and Dr. Sandesara have published critical editions of Padmanabha's *Kanhadade Prabandha*, Bhalana's *Kadambari*, the *Haramala* attributed to Pramananda, the *Chappas* of Akho and other classics of Gujarat. The Forbes Sabha and the Gujarat Vidya Sabha continue to work in this field.

It was expected that, the Partition being based on a religious difference, orthodoxy would be accentuated after Independence. And as there is a certain rivalry among religions, orthodoxy has bred orthodoxy, though all the outward veneer of unity and equality is maintained. It has brought back in its train superstition and obscurantism, against which social reformers had fought in the last century. Gatulal Dhruva

in his *Jyotirdhara* constantly argues against irrational opinion and custom as Mashruwala did in the pages of the *Harijan* every week. Mashruwala's little work, *Samuli Kranti*, is a classic succinctly expressing a well-thought-out scheme for the ethical, religious and social regeneration of the country. He is of the opinion that all religions are imperfect, and infallibility should not be claimed for any prophet or *guru*. No prophet or *guru* should be equated with God. Welfare of the whole race, from the positive standpoint, should be the test of every ideology or way of life. Man errs and falls when he thinks simply of his individual salvation. Mashruwala is supported in this social and positive attitude towards life by two other thinkers who have been influencing the mind of Gujarat. They are Kedarnath and Vinoba Bhave.

The idealistic outlook and comprehensive system of thought associated with Sri Aurobindo have begun to capture the imagination of our younger poets and of many who search for a faith in a world becoming more and more earthy every day. Ambalal Purani and Sundaram, through the translation of Sri Aurobindo's writings and the exposition of his tenets in the quarterly *Dakshina*, have reinforced the natural leanings of our people towards an idealistic faith. Sri Aurobindo's fascinating philosophy is a call to every yearning soul to reach out to the Supreme and—receiving light and energy therefrom—to transform the lower physical and psychical instruments into perfect vehicles of the Divine. This philosophy has the broadest basis possible and does not deny life but wants each of its aspects to be transformed to a stage where man would partake of the Supreme in all its joys. In effect, however, in spite of the clarity of its aims this philosophy is fast becoming doctrinaire, sectarian and mystifying.

In literature this has served as a two-fold force. Sundaram's recent poetry is entirely inspired by it. Pujalal has always belonged to Sri Aurobindo's school, and in the poetry of Prajaram Rawal, Pinakin Thakore, Jayant Pathak, Ushanas and several others, the same inspiration can be noticed. The development of reflective prose under this influence has perhaps been of greater advantage. Both Purani and Sundaram

have translated into supple Gujarati some of Sri Aurobindo's magnificent English prose. As philosophical writing it is more sinewy and beautiful than the rather simple prose of Gandhiji and Mashruwala.

Our numerous periodicals have contributed much to Gujarati literature. *Sanskriti*, edited by Umashankar Joshi, has made its mark because of its literary standard, catholic outlook and comprehensive aims. *Kumar*, the best Gujarati magazine for youth, encourages good poetry and its correct appreciation. *Shikshan ane Sahitya* interprets Gandhism and tackles educational problems. The literary notes and reviews published weekly in *Janmabhumi*, *Prajabandhu*, *Sandesh* and *Gujarat Mitra* try to bridge the gulf between the lay reader and the specialist. The radio has greatly encouraged poetry that can be chanted and has also been of considerable assistance in the development of the drama and dramatic technique.

Literary talent has successfully turned to drama, the cultural climate being particularly favourable to its growth. In all the big cities of Gujarat there are amateur dramatic associations, while in colleges and elsewhere full-length as well as one-act plays have been staged with remarkable success. In Ahmedabad and Baroda schools have been opened to give instruction in stage-craft and dramatic interpretation. Dhan-sukhlal Mehta, Jashwant Thakar, Jayashankar "Sundari" and Dina Gandhi have been doing their best to help foster the art. The centenary celebrations of the Gujarati theatre in Bombay, Surat and Ahmedabad also gave a fillip to this activity. A Dramatic Academy has been established in Bombay. It publishes a monthly magazine called *Gujarati Natya*, which is edited by Madhukar Randeria. Gulabdas Broker edits a quarterly exclusively devoted to the publication of one-act plays on various themes.

Among the established, veteran poets of the 30's, Sundaram and Umashankar Joshi have maintained their literary worth. While Umashankar revels in life and movement, Sundaram's work is centred in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. He has sacrificed emotion and a wider canvas for a deeper plumbing of the Self. Both have influenced our younger poets

in their approach to art, and of that group Niranjan Bhagat and Rajendra Shah deserve special mention. Bhagat's wit is almost metaphysical and has a poetic quality; Shah's treatment of nature is very sensitive and his music has a haunting quality. There is certainly a tendency in modern poetry to pseudo-lyricism, witticism, superficial subtlety and sing-song rhythm, but many poems are marked by a robust freedom and genuine understanding of the recesses of the heart. They sing of nature without a moral or religious bias and of love without any inhibition. Our younger writers have not yet found their bearings but they are yearning for a faith and striving to find it in love or nature. Only a very few of them, however, show intellectual maturity.

There has been considerable advance in dramatic writing and in prose fiction. Dramatic technique is better understood and several experiments are carried on. The dialogue is more natural, lively and pointed, and dialect is used with great effect. The motive is more clearly defined. Writers go to history for themes but their message and bias are modern. Problems of sex are also exploited but with restraint. While the typical modern play is realistic, the presentation often has hues of fantasy which add to its merit.

Among playwrights of the older generation, Munshi, Chandravadan Mehta and Dhansukhlal Mehta continue to show creative ability. Dhansukhlal Mehta has dramatized a striking theme of frustration and moral tragedy, *Dhumrasera*, from Gulabdas Broker's novel of that name. Jayanti Dalal, Yashodhar Mehta, Pushkar Chandarwakar, Chunilal Madia and Pragaji Dosa have recently come to the fore. They deal with a variety of themes and generally succeed in providing satirical fun or evoking deep emotion.

In the field of the novel, Manubhai Pancholi reveals himself as a mature observer of contemporary life and its problems. The prime motive of some new writers of fiction like Ishwar Petlikar and Chunilal Madia is the depiction of the life of the unsophisticated, common people of the villages. In her recent novel, *Amar-Vel*, and her short stories Sarojini Mehta

takes up for "screening" the age-old problems of the Hindu order of life and its die-hard sentiments. More successful, her sister Vinodini Nilkantha throws a searchlight on the traditional patterns of life in an easy, urbane style. The stories and sketches by Kishansingh Chavda, collected under the title *Amas-na-Tara*, have a charm of their own. He has the gift of giving a romantic and sentimental touch to ordinary characters and incidents.

Bachubhai Rawat, Anantrai Rawal, Mansukhlal Jhaveri and Yashwant Shukla deserve notice as writers of sensitive prose. Masterpieces in their own *genre* are the diaries of Mahadevabhai, rich in historical and biographical data and remarkable for their humility; *Jivana-nu Parodhyu*, an autobiography dealing with the early years of Shri Prabhudas Gandhi, nephew of the Mahatma, but virtually a story of Gandhiji as Prabhudas saw him in the making in South Africa; *Arvachina Kavita* by Sundaram, a critical survey of modern Gujarati poetry, rightly praised for its scholarship and sympathetic judgments; and *Samuli Kranti*, propounding in terse but simple language Mashruwala's views on the ideals and methods of a total revolution in social concepts and practices. The last takes its clue from Gandhism but the approach in some of its fundamentals and its conclusions is different. It is a little classic that deserves wide recognition.

In spite of the apparent scope afforded by freedom and opportunity, lofty achievement in creative work or literary criticism is lacking. Great art, forceful passion, original thought, are not conspicuous. The tendency to translate and imitate is obvious. Criticism has been more sympathetic than judicious and corrective. Owing perhaps to a lack of vigorous and sustained inspiration, literary composition seems to be lacking in beauty and power. This is an indication of frustration and social distraction. Perhaps it reveals a lack of faith in the writer's own mission. There has certainly been a tremendous upheaval in the traditional values of life, which has resulted in a certain bizarre quality, both in concept and construction.

INDO-ANGLIAN LITERATURE (1947-54)**DR. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR**

Nearly seven years have elapsed since I contributed to the symposium "From Jaipur to Banaras," surveying Indo-Anglian literature during the two preceding years. Jaipur but vaguely, though not unhopefully, looked forward to national Independence. At Banaras, however, Independence was a fact; and accordingly there was then a feeling of fulfilment, although it was inevitably mixed up with bewilderment about the present as well as anxiety about the immediate future. During these post-independence years the bewilderment has receded a little, but not the anxiety. Problems get solved but new ones spring up to daunt our statesmen and nation-builders. Here, at Annamalainagar, we can steer clear of facile hopes and enervating despair. Strengthened, if also somewhat sobered, by our recent experience as a free nation, we can now face the problems that arise—or have lately arisen—with steady vision no less than courageous realism.

In 1947 many thought that since British political control had been withdrawn, the English language too would (or should) suffer an eclipse in our country. It has been argued, on the contrary, that we should continue to retain our familiarity with English because it is a very useful tool—an invaluable key to the multifarious sides of modern knowledge. Besides, the influence of English literature on Indian secular and even religious thought has been quite considerable and our regional literatures have not yet ceased to be purposively conscious of the movements in modern English literature. Apologists of English, while readily admitting that it is a wonderful tool and also a rich literature, usually fail to stress the important and vital fact that, in a sense, English writing too is—or has now become—an Indian literature. Independence, notwithstanding the number of Indians writing in English, shows no diminution in quantity nor depreciation in quality. Indo-Anglian literature comprises the work of some of India's greatest sons and daughters: Ramamohan Roy, Romesh Chunder Dutt,

Toru Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Professor Radhakrishnan and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Surely a literature that includes such names deserves to be included as a national literature.

Poetry is the soul of any literature; prose in its diverse forms—fiction, the essay, biography and autobiography, history, criticism, *belles lettres*, oratory, journalism—is the body, or the mind, or no more than the flaunting outer garment. It is the poets who feed the soul of a literature and keep it alive. If the poets fail a literature, none else—neither legislators nor educationists nor the mere prosaists—can long ward off the inevitable doom. It is therefore most gratifying to note that during the past seven years Indo-Anglian poets have been so fruitfully active. In my survey at Banaras, I made a reference to Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. Only a few cantos had been published by 1947, but they gave a foretaste of the magnificent, nectarean feast yet to come. The entire epic has since been published in two volumes, making a total of nearly 700 pages or 25,000 lines. Although published during 1950 and 1951, *Savitri* was begun 50 years ago while Sri Aurobindo was still at Baroda; but it was during the long years of silent *yoga* at Pondicherry, the years of ardour and aspiration and achievement, the mellowed and golden 30's and 40's, that the poem acquired its present amplitude and depth, comprehending heaven and earth in a total view. When he passed away on December 5th, 1950, Sri Aurobindo left this stupendous modern epic all but complete. In the published form *Savitri* spans out into 12 books, and there can be no doubt that this "Divine Comedy"—if only on account of its grandeur of conception and sheer immensity of canvas—must be ranked among the very noblest achievements of the human race. The story is still the familiar *Mahabharata* story of Savitri's victory over Yama, the God of death. Into this story Sri Aurobindo has poured the riches of his vast Yogic knowledge and turned, as it were, a splendid little rivulet into the opulence and glory of a very Ganga-Yamuna flowing together. The blank verse is clear and crys-

talline. The story—especially in the later books—moves forward with a marvellous ease and sureness, and the architectonics of the whole overwhelm the reader by their boldness and originality. According to Sri Aurobindo's conception, Savitri is the "World Mother" herself who has coerced her divinity into human shape so that she may visibly play the roles of creatrix, collaboratrix and mediatrix, and who can overcome Death and restore to humanity a lost Eden. The entire poem is full of felicitous descriptions, sparks of divination and ambrosial utterances. *Savitri*, in fact, is a radiant poetic almost parallel to *The Life Divine*. Among other posthumous publications are a rendering of the first canto of *Kumarasambhava* and *Last Poems* (1952). Other early poems or verse translations are being published from time to time in the pages of the quarterly journal, *Advent*, the monthly *Mother India* and the annuals published by Sri Aurobindo's disciples from Calcutta and Bombay respectively. It seems to be still too soon to attempt a final assessment of the whole body of Sri Aurobindo's poetry.

Several of Sri Aurobindo's disciples and admirers too have published collections of poetry during the past few years. K. D. Sethna's *The Adventure of the Apocalypse*, Dilip Kumar Roy's *Eyes of Light*, Romen's *The Golden Apocalypse*, *Poems* by Themis, Lotika Ghose's *White Dawns of Awakening* and J. S. Agarwala's *The Mystic Shrine* deserve mention here. Miss Ghose's dedication—"At the Master's feet I lay these poems, pale glimmerings from his Central Sun, awaiting the full light of his dawn in my heart"—might well preface each of the above collections. These disciples are all irresistibly lured by the far horizons of the Spirit, their minds are filled with visions of the panorama of the Spirit's landscape, and they are all seized with a divine discontent that can only end with the finality of realization. Zigzagging through ardours, anxieties, gleams, visions, half-lights, elations, setbacks, shocks of pain and thrills of ecstasy, they press on to their goal. It was Sri Aurobindo's hope and the burden of his prophecy as a critic that future poetry would render Reality in forms and rhythms that partake of the quintessential nature of the

mantra—the incantation that is partly a prayer from below and partly an answering whisper from above. The Aurobindonians strive in the strength which this faith gives them, and that is the reason why—the inevitable failures notwithstanding—their best poems are appreciably good. The passing away of the master in 1950 has naturally inspired some nobly articulate poetry. Here are a few lines from J. Vijayatunga's moving tribute:—

Out of thy love

For God Thou lovedst us with all our weakness
And animality; Thy radiance cut across
The grossness of our lives, and touched dark corners,
Thy wisdom shed drops upon our dry hearts,
Thy glory, wide as the sea, touched the shores of our darkness.
Are we sad today? Is the earth dark without light?
Nay, Master, Thou didst not live in vain,
Thy life sublime and austere was not spent
For naught . . .

Some of the older poets have been fairly active and there have also been many new arrivals. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's *Freedom Came* and *A Treasury of Poems*, V. K. Gokak's *The Song of Life and Other Poems*, the late V. N. Bhushan's *The Far Ascent*, Adi K. Sett's *The Light above the Clouds*, Gurdial Mallik's *Hound of the Heart*, Nissim Ezekiel's *A Time to Change* and *Sixty Poems* and collections of poems by Armando Menezes, Krishna Srinivas (*Bud and Blossoms* and *Magic Pearls*), C. Raju (*This Modern Age and Other Poems*), Suryanarayan Sadhu (*National Anthem and Other Poems*), Basil Norton (*Independence Day*), R. M. Challa (*Passion and Philosophy*), M. V. Mohan (*Love-Wings*) and Professor Shaival (*Only Woman Knows*)—and the list is by no means exhaustive—indicate the variety and versatility of the Indo-Anglian muse. Although not all of these have as yet acquired the right voice in articulateness, the best poets or the poets at their best manage to achieve the right fusion of idea and sound, form and diction. A poem by a conscientious artist in verse like Armando Menezes can never disappoint, and it is a pity he does not write more often. Shaival's century of five-line stanzas are on a first view a cross between the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam and the *Sringara Shataka*

of Bhartrihari; they are sensuous, defiant, atheistic and on the whole effective. But sometimes Shaival is content merely to rant at the top of his voice. Nissim Ezekiel is a much better artist, and his verses are lucid—a merit in these days—splendidly evocative, and, generally speaking, satisfyingly sensuous. Persons or places, memories or situations, literary echoes or moments of vision, all inspire Mr. Ezekiel to poetic utterance; and he is particularly and painfully and poignantly aware of the flesh, its insistent urges, its stark ecstasies, its disturbing filiations with the mind. On the other hand, Gurdial Mallik is a hymnist of the spirit. Since his 27th year, when he had a vision of the Supreme, he has tirelessly sung in terms of adoration and ecstasy. His *Song Book*, being verily the diary of his soul's immaculate quest, will prove a guide and a solace to all spiritual aspirants. Besides these regular collections of verse, stray poems have appeared in journals like *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The Indian P.E.N.*, *Triveni* and *Swatantra*, and in their columns or elsewhere we often come across very satisfying work by Buddhadeva Bose, Amiya Chakravarty, Humayun Kabir, B. Rajan, Tambimuttu, P. Lal and others too numerous to catalogue here. Good translations too are issued from time to time, e.g., *Soudamini and Other Poems* by "Sri Sri" from the original Telugu of Puri-panda Appalaswamy and *Songs of Zarathushtra* by Dastur Framroze Ardeshir Bode and Piloo Nanavatty. But enough has been said to show that the poetic landscape is neither dull nor barren of outstanding achievement.

Turning to drama, two or three works deserve more than a passing reference in this survey. Three of Tagore's plays, *Mukta Dhara*, *Natir Puja* and *Chandalika*, came out in an excellent English translation in the popular Champak Library which the Oxford University Press inaugurated some years ago. *Two Women* by Bharati Sarabhai, unlike her earlier verse drama *The Well of the People*, is in prose, but the prose is not seldom charged with poetic feeling and is often knotted with pregnant thought. The tension at the heart of Hindustan, the tension caused by the opposing pulls of tradition and revolt—a tension that is still unresolved and that each of us

must resolve in his or her own way—this tension is the soul of the play. The two women are Anuradha, the wife of the Anglicized Kanaka Raya, and Urvashi, the widowed girl who turns a devotional singer; and each of these two women is herself two women in one—an artist and a saint. The great merit of the drama is that although it reaches some sort of conclusion, we are left with the impression that the real conclusion is yet to come—not in the lives of Anuradha and Urvashi alone, but in our lives, in Bharat's life, as well. In Dilip Kumar Roy's blank-verse play, *Chaitanya*, the drama of aspiration, conflict and illumination takes place in the human heart and soul. Its thought-substance is as stimulating as its action is gripping and the blank verse is at once poetic and dramatic. In *Slaves of Ideas and Other Plays*, A. S. P. Ayyar handles the prose medium effectively; he is seen to be a vigorous critic of contemporary life. I might also include here *Five One-Act Plays* by Seth Govind Das, translated into English by Professor Rajendra Verma. These are really playlets, but in each case the end of the play seems to be only a fresh beginning. Idealism and actuality clash in *Endurance*; the old and the new in *Rivalry*; *Id and Holi* is a plea for Hindu-Muslim unity. There is, finally, the dance-drama in verse, *The Cloth of Gold* by M. Krishnamurthi. In this unusual and unclassifiable work, the verse now and then acquires an uncanny and eerie suggestiveness and the words are then charged with a high potential of *dhvani* which charms and chastens the inward ear. Dreams are the meeting ground of Time and Eternity, the self dies in Time and is reborn in Eternity. The Dream-Epilogue constitutes an admirable fusion of traditional Indian thought and competent English versification.

Fiction, here as elsewhere, is the most popular of current literary forms. Most English magazines and newspapers in the country—even students' magazines in schools and colleges—publish short stories and occasionally serialize novels. What disappoints is not the quantity but the quality. A short story seems to be a fatally easy thing to concoct, yet the best in the *genre* are a mere handful. The 14 Indian stories in the

collection of *International Stories* published by the *Hindustan Times*—especially the stories originally written in English (including the two stories from Ceylon)—make interesting reading, though none is outstanding. The short story, whether it centres in an incident or in a character or achieves efflorescence in a unique atmosphere, draws largely on the locality, though of course the great short story is somehow challengingly free from the limitations of time and space. The difficulties admitted, our best writers have boldly surmounted them and given impressive collections of short stories. Manjeri Isvaran's *No Anklet Bells for Her and Other Stories* and the long short story *Immersion*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories* and *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess*, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's *Rice and Other Stories* and *Blood and Stones*, are among the best of their kind. As a literary artist, Isvaran heads them all. Two other collections that may be mentioned here—each of a different kind—are *Hemakumari and Other Stories* by N. R. Deobhankar and *Gripping Tales of Ind* by A. S. P. Ayyar. There is also the long short story, *Four Chapters*, by Tagore recently issued by Visva-Bharati. It is a poignant love story set against the background of revolutionary Bengal. Love is ruthless; so is jealousy; and revolutionary idealism slowly degenerates into revolutionary ruthlessness. Start a violent revolution and you end up as a blackmailer, a crafty manipulator of human material or even as a murderer: it is the theme of Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. But *Four Chapters*, being the work of Tagore, is touched also by poetry and tragedy.

Full-length novels by Indo-Anglian writers are not as numerous as one would wish. Bhabani Bhattacharya has followed up his *So Many Hungers* with another successful novel, *Music for Mohini*. R. K. Narayan continues to skim the surface of middle-class sophistication and writes with an enviable ease, a neat brevity and an unfailing sense of humour. Mr. Sampath has been followed by *The Financial Expert*. Actually Margayya, the financial expert, is an unconvincing person and several of the other characters too are mere carica-

tures. The women, however, are more real, probably because they are largely passive characters with patient sufferance for their badge. Mulk Raj Anand's recent *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, although not disappointing to his admirers, will hardly gain any new converts. It is a pointless caricature of the princely order. (How different, for example, is E. M. Forster's *Hill of Devi*, the portrait of the late Maharaja of Dewas, senior!) Anand writes briskly as usual, but his style is generally undistinguished and occasionally even slipshod. Sex is brought in again and again, and contemporary political history is sought to be fused with the personal history of a few individuals. Nevertheless the novel has a sense of precipitancy, things happen one after another, and accordingly it is sure to "bounce" the average reader of fiction.

The Vermilion Boat by Sudhin Ghose is a very different type of novel. It is a fantasy more than a novel, supposed to be set in present-day Bengal. Even fantasy, as Max Beerbohm has reminded us, "should have a solid basis in reality" and Sudhin Ghose knows this well enough. In his novel, therefore, the real and the ideal mingle, fantasy coalesces with everyday crudity, and the reader—even like the narrator hero of the novel—is nearly lost in the labyrinth.

Venu Chitale's *In Transit* is another remarkable essay in fiction. It is at once a family chronicle like *The Forsyte Saga* and an epic narrative like *War and Peace*: this is not to claim that *In Transit* is on a par with those world classics of fiction; yet to have aimed high greatly is something. Indian history between the two world wars was packed with change—social, political, economic and psychological. The era of the Lokamanya imperceptibly gave place to the era of Mahatma Gandhi, itself now careering towards the still unmanifest horizons of the future. The task of combining in a single picture the personal and national perspectives and of maintaining the right balance between the weight of tradition and the momentum of change calls for creative powers of the highest order, and it is therefore no derogation to Venu Chitale's work to say that she has not succeeded in making her long novel an epic of renascent India. As a study of Hindu joint-family life

In Transit is invaluable. A joint-family is an intricate microcosm; there is tragedy in a smothered sob, and there is melodrama in vain attitudinizations. Miss Chitale has caught the sobs, and has not missed the drama.

Dilip Kumar Roy's *The Upward Spiral* is a long novel of aspiration and realization. The discussions are seemingly endless, but the ribbon of the underlying yogic purpose holds all together, and for a novel so austere motivated *The Upward Spiral* is a fascinating story of the *yogi* and his neophytes and of the filiations between the material and the spiritual worlds. I may add to the list a first novel, *Zohra*, by Zeenat Futehally and the new revised editions of two of A. S. P. Ayyar's books, *Chanakya and Chandragupta* and *Baladitya, A Historical Romance of Ancient India*. Rereading these one realizes that Shri Ayyar is still our best writer of historical fiction. *Indian Cavalcade* by Bhabani Bhattacharya also contains a few striking glimpses of Indian history.

The phenomenal success of Gandhiji's *My Experiments with Truth* and Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* has evidently spurred several others, and consequently there has been a spate of autobiographies and books of reminiscences. The experiences of spiritual seekers are of particular interest to this fear-pursued generation, and to this category of books belong Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Swami Ramdas's *In the Vision of God* and Sadhu Shantinatha's *Experiences of a Truth Seeker*. Yogananda's book, repeatedly reprinted, is something of a universal conference of *yogis* of all lands, and it is also a testament of Divine Love and Divine Order. Swami Ramdas's autobiography, written simply and apparently without effort, shows how a *yogi's* is a charmed life—a life of infinite possibility, ardour and striving. Veiling his godhead he descends to the earth to live the life of a man among men, to arouse by the seeming ordinariness of his life the hidden infinities of his being.

Of autobiographies by the "laity" the most fascinating is Savitri Devi Nanda's *The City of the Two Gateways*, while the most aggressive and ambitious is Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The former is the

record of the life of a sensitive Panjabi girl, and by necessary implication the story covers also her family and school life and even the sinuous ramifications of the social life of the Hindu aristocracy of pre-Partition Panjab. All the old-world beauty of ancient Hindu culture that has defied time and retained the ambrosial taste of *Sanatana Dharma* is recaptured by Savitri Devi. So her book becomes in fact a piece of exquisite embroidery in which are woven together the many strands of our living traditions, the ideas that should govern wise living and the manners that can render such wise living beautiful at the same time. Nirad Chaudhuri's book is in many ways a contrast to Savitri Devi Nanda's book. It is a heavy, sullen and almost morbid book. Although Shri Chaudhuri has a keen intellect it is thickly shrouded in an abnormal sensibility which alone calls the tune, and the intellect has perforce merely to play the obedient piper. He sees meanness and selfishness everywhere; he is disgruntled with both Indians and Englishmen; and it would appear from his analysis that all our yesterdays have only lighted the way to this dismal end—hypocrisy and mendacity. Although weighted with learning, wisdom eludes him somehow, and he has been unable to forge either an inner or an outer harmony. The enemies he battles against are often only spectres which his own prejudices have conjured up before him. Nevertheless, passionate discontent is better than mulish complacency, and, with all its limitations, Shri Chaudhuri's autobiography has the supreme merit of courageous honesty. Also deserving special mention are *Dclhi-Chunking Diary* by K. P. S. Menon, *Reflections and Reminiscences* by Nagendranath Gupta, P. E. Dustoor's *American Days* and the late Unni Nayar's *My Malabar*. Finally, the late M. N. Roy's *Memoirs* which are appearing serially in the *Radical Humanist* and which when republished in book form will surely be hailed as one of the great autobiographies of our time.

In biography the most ambitious venture has been D. G. Tendulkar's monumental ten-volume study of the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. Planned on a vast scale, carefully documented, lavishly illustrated and tastefully produced, this

biography of the Father of the Nation will enjoy unparalleled authority as a reference book. Krishna Hutheesing's *Story of Gandhiji* is a book of a much smaller compass and is primarily intended for the young, while G. D. Birla's book on the Mahatma is valuable if only because of the letters included in it. Dilip Kumar Roy's *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me* is an engagingly personal account of the master, while R. R. Diwakar's *Mahayogi* is a brief introduction to Sri Aurobindo's life and thought. Swami Nikhilananda's recently published *Vivekananda: A Biography* is a useful addition to the growing literature on the subject. D. F. Karaka's book on Nehru, "the lotus-eater from Kashmir!"—is but a journalistic rehash of recent Indian history and is a perverse mixture of fact, fancy and prejudice, which does scant justice either to the man or the statesman. On the other hand Balraj Madhok's biography of Shyamaprasad Mukherjee does give us a reasonably fair picture of the man and his work. Of collections of portraits Nagendranath Gupta's *Seven Noble Lives* is in a class apart.

One of the major historical undertakings of our time is the co-operative ten-volume *History and Culture of the Indian People*, sponsored by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan under the direction of Shri K. M. Munshi and the general editorship of Dr. R. C. Majumdar. Three massive volumes have already appeared and the rest are promised in quick succession. Among other recent historical studies and economic handbooks are M. N. Roy's *The Russian Revolution* and *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. B. K. Barua's *A Cultural History of Assam*, O. Ramachandriah's *Studies in the History of Vijayanagar*, S. Gopal's *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon* and V. S. Krishna's *International Economic Co-operation*. It must be admitted, however, that, barring a few exceptions, Indo-Anglian historians are content to adopt a pedantic manner of writing which is apt to scare away the common reader. History too is an art, though it might be a science as well in its methods of inquiry; and without the glow of a living prose style, history is born dead and is indeed dry as dust. Where are our Gibbons and Macaulays, Trevelyan and Wingfield-

Stratfords? We too had, in writers like Jadunath Sircar, historians in the grand tradition; and there is no reason why their example should not be emulated by present-day historians.

Literary and art criticism is another field where our record is not very impressive. The recently published *The Future Poetry*, a reprint of a series of articles by Sri Aurobindo that appeared in the *Arya* nearly 40 years ago, shows that there is scope for a school of Indo-Anglian criticism. *The Future Poetry* is literary history and comparative criticism rolled into one. It fuses the elements of scholarship, dialectic, vision and prophecy into a stimulating and deeply satisfying work of art in prose. Sri Aurobindo's *Foundations of Indian Culture* (recently republished in a single volume in the United States) is another enlightening treatise which offers a key to the understanding and appreciation of our many-sided national culture. Other books of critical theory and practice include Kamala S. Dongerkery's *The Romance of Indian Embroidery*, K. S. Venkataramani's *Nature of Creative Art*, K. Chandrasekharan's *Studies and Sketches*, *The Poet as Sthitha-Pragna* and *Religion and Poetry*, Nolini Kanta Gupta's *Poets and Mystics*, M. P. Pandit's *The Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishad*, V. K. Gokak's *The Poetic Approach to Language*, V. K. Ayappan Pillai's *The Song of Roland and Other Essays*, P. R. Krishnaswami's *The Poetic in the 19th Century Novel*, Itrat-Husain's *The Mystic Element in the Metaphysical Poets of the 17th Century*, studies in Shakespearean Comedy by S. C. Sen Gupta and C. N. Desai and monographs on Medows Taylor by G. P. Mansukhani and on Subramania Bharati by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri.

Competent histories of the various regional literatures too have appeared in English during the last few years, viz., *Punjabi Literature* by Mohan Singh, *Twentieth Century Urdu Literature* by Muhammad Sadiq, *Maithili Literature* by Jayakantha Mishra, *Tamil Literature* by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, *Sanskrit Literature* (a P.E.N. book) by K. Chandrasekharan and V. H. Subramania Sastri, *Drama in Sanskrit Literature* by R. V. Jahagirdar, and *A Study of Orissan Folk-lore* by Kunjebhari Das. Two books on modern Bengali literature also

deserve special mention—Buddhadeva Bose's *An Acre of Green Grass* and Lila Ray's just published *A Challenging Decade: Bengali Literature in the Forties*. The latter is in the main a reprint of Mrs. Ray's monthly contributions to *The Indian P.E.N.*

Religion and philosophy continue to lure some of our best thinkers and writers. Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's *Phases of Religion and Culture*, like his earlier *World Religions*, is packed with scholarship and wisdom, while Satishchandra Chatterjee's *Fundamentals of Hinduism* and K. S. Ramaswami Sastri's *Aspects of Hindu Culture* are useful and reliable guides. Hinduism includes the Hindu way of thinking and the Hindu way of life: thought issues in action and action crystallizes in thought. Philosophy and everyday actuality are thus doubled in Hinduism which is at once dynamic, scientific and humane. Gurdial Mallik's *Divine Dwellers in the Desert*, a study of the Sufis, M. S. Patel's *The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, P. T. Raju's *Indian Idealism*, the new history of philosophy sponsored by the Union Ministry of Education and H. V. Divatia's *Art of Life in the Bhagavad Gita* are among recent additions.

Good translations are welcome at all times, especially in an age of transition like ours. Hari Prasad Shastri's translation of the "*Bala Kanda*" and "*Ayodhya Kanda*" of Valmiki's *Ramayana* reads very well and carries something of the momentum and beauty of the original. C. Rajagopalachari's *Mahabharata* gives the substance of Vyasa's colossal epic with a characteristic contemporary slant, and as the first volume of Bhavan's Book University it has become a best-seller. It is a work of prose art in its own right and is laden with significances that no intelligent man can miss. Sudha Majumdar's *Ramayana* in the same series is also well-written and it will prove a useful introduction to Valmiki's *mahakavya*. Following his translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Dhammapada*, in his new work, *The Principal Upanishads*, Professor S. Radhakrishnan attempts a modern; almost a definitive, English rendering of 18 Upanishads including the *Brihadaranyaka* and the *Chandogya*, a Herculean achievement for so hard-worked

and hard-working a philosopher-statesman as our Vice-President.

The essay is a popular form, even like the short story, but really good essays are a rarity in our climate. We are too solemn and too serious and too sanctimonious to be able to excel in the light essay. Nevertheless, Pothan Joseph, Chalapathi Rao ("Magnus" and "M.C." are his *noms-de-plume*), Raghunathan ("Vigneshwara"), Bangaruswami, Khasa Subba Rao ("Saka") and Iswara Dutt have done very well in this difficult *genre*, and each of them has a style and a mind distinctly his own. Mulk Raj Anand's *Lines to an Indian Air*, K. L. Subba Rao's *The Rhythm of Life* and Pardesi's *Men and Manners* are also collections of essays. S. R. Dongerkery's books on university education in India and Britain are among the best of their kind. C. Rajagopalachari's *University Addresses*, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's *Essays and Addresses* and K. M. Munshi's *Our Greatest Need* have an educative value in the present national context. Oratory today is not what it was in the days of Gladstone and Disraeli or Gokhale and Surendranath Bannerjee. The loudspeaker, the radio and television have both emancipated the speaker and rendered him insignificant. Even so, the accomplished orator—a Churchill, for example, or, in our country, a Nehru or a Rajaji or a Radhakrishnan—turns these very limitations into opportunities. Words are easy, after all, and by themselves are nothing: the person who speaks them is everything, that is why even the silences of the great are so significant. When we hear Rajaji, we almost see the wires humming, the machinery of his mind working; when Nehru speaks, all the riches of his mind, the sinews of his strength, the throbs of his sensibility are revealed. A speech like the one he made in the Constituent Assembly two days after Gandhiji's death was effortless in its simplicity, yet shot through and through with agony, with tenderness, with despair, with reviving hope. All of Nehru was in that great speech; it was verily a masterpiece of moving eloquence. •

Indo-Anglian journalism has noble traditions dating back to the early days of the Freedom Movement. It still attracts

some of the most alert minds in the country. Raghunathan and Krupanidhi, Iswara Dutt and Rama Rao, Chalapati Rao and Frank Moraes, A. D. Mani and S. Natarajan, not to mention the veteran Pothan Joseph or a veteran in another field but a new arrival in journalism like Professor K. Swaminathan, are writers of whom any country might be proud. Journals like *The Aryan Path*, *The Indian P.E.N.*, the *Modern Review*, the *Indian Review*, and *Mother India*; weekly papers like *Swatantra*, *Mysindia*, *Thought*, the *Radical Humanist*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and *Shanker's Weekly*; quarterly journals like *Triveni*, the *Advent*, the *Humanist Way* and the *Visvabharati Quarterly* are a constant reminder to us that serious journalism in English is gallantly holding its own. Both *Triveni* and *The Aryan Path* have now completed 25 years of meritorious service, and for them there lies ahead an even more fruitful ministry in the cause of humanistic and spiritual awakening. To Shri K. Ramakotiswara Rau of *Triveni* and to Shri and Shrimati B. P. Wadia of *The Aryan Path* the world of culture owes a load of debt for the singleness of purpose with which they have, during all these difficult years, kept their journals afloat. If *Triveni* has striven to promote understanding between the different linguistic areas—no mean service—*The Aryan Path* has addressed itself to the dissemination of the abiding values and verities and also to the task of building up, through its review section, a sound critical tradition in our country.

Despite any serious omissions or commissions, this by no means exhaustive survey of Indian writing in English since Independence should serve, I hope, to dispel the popular notion that English is wholly an alien language and literature to us. It certainly was so 150 years ago, but it is so no longer. Should Indians write in English? Well, they have written in the past, they are writing now and they will probably continue to write in the future. Why create barriers where none actually exist? "As time goes on," said Sri Aurobindo in the course of a letter to Dilip Kumar Roy, "people will become more and more polyglot, and these mental barriers will begin to disappear."

**KANNADA LITERATURE (1948-53):
FROM BANARAS TO CHIDAMBARAM**

SHRI C. K. NAGARAJA RAO

Shrimati Sarojini Naidu said in her Presidential Address at Banaras: "We have been assigned the privilege of shaping the thought of humanity and therefore its destiny, and we should not have petty labels showing our differences. Be masters in whatever language you write, so long as it be the language of the human heart and human spirit. For it is a duty to proclaim the truth everywhere, at all times. Literature is the only way in which the truth of life can be kept alive." In reviewing the development of Kannada literature since the dawn of Independence, one is reminded of this inspiring message delivered at the last P.E.N. Conference held at Banaras.

Nine years have passed since the cessation of World War II and seven years since we achieved political freedom. We are suffering, however, from mental depression, having had to face the after-effects of War, the horrors of Partition, other calamities big and small, insecurity in world politics and several changes.

During the early days of freedom, we could see only the overwhelming joy of the Indian mind expressed in every form of literary activity—drama, poetry, fiction, biography and the essay. Before that period it took a decade or even more to sell a single edition of a thousand copies of any novel in Kannada, let alone other books. Now readers have increased with the spread of literacy; so more copies are sold, and rapidly too. This has been very encouraging for our starved writers and a larger number have now entered the arena of literature. More readers, more writers, more publishers and quick sales have led to the publication of attractively printed volumes which are sometimes well illustrated also. The rewards of authorship, are, however, not sufficient to enable writers to maintain themselves with their pen. So other ways of earning

a living have to be sought, which means divided energy and attention. The struggle for food, clothing and other amenities diminishes a writer's strength, vigour and courage. Thought does not take definite shape and sometimes this results in disaster.

As in other languages, the short story tops the list of our literary productions. More than two thousand short stories have been published during the period under review. The short story has dominated our minds so much that the Writers' Association of Bangalore has conducted conferences restricted to votaries of this art, except once when they conducted a *kavi sammelan*. Their last conference was held in 1951, on which occasion novelists were also invited along with short-story-writers. No literary function leaves a financial surplus. But it was otherwise with this conference; and the executive committee resolved to publish a collection of 10 to 20 stories, which appeared in 1951. As I happened to be on the selection committee, I read more than 300 stories written during the year and found that most of these were of a fair standard. But it was hard to pick out the required number which could be classified as outstanding in merit. However that may be, one can assert that the short story in Kannada has taken recognizable shape and form, and displays freshness and variety in technique. The pioneers in this branch of literary art, like Shri Srinivasa and other veterans, are still contributing many good stories. And many a new story-teller has joined the old brigade. While V. M. Joshi has tried to give us realistic pictures of war and army life, T. S. Mani has drawn our attention to rural living and Shri Hoyisala has proved a master of fantasy. "C.K.N." and others have written stories with a psychological twist which have been very popular. Others who have scored in this *genre* include K. Aswathanarayana Rao, Shrimati H. V. Savitramma and Shrimati Lalita Ramana and Irani Srinivas. All these have helped us a great deal to keep pace with new trends and ideas in a growing world.

Some short-story-writers have now devoted themselves exclusively to novel-writing, purely for financial gains. When you look at the bulk of each novel, it appears as though every writer is very seriously striving to bring out a bigger novel

than the others. This competition has had inevitable reactions on its literary value. In the early days of freedom a few of the novels published were entirely devoted to the depiction of the struggle for freedom. They remind us of the sufferings and hardships which were the lot of those who took part in the struggle.

Following stalwarts in this field like the late M. S. Puttanna, the late B. Venkatachar and V. Galaganath, Shri Karanth tops the ranks of the novelists of our day. Ever since the publication of his first novel, *Kanyabali*, he has been active in maintaining the standard of his earlier work. Each of his novels reflects freshness of thought, variety of theme and deep insight into the human mind, and presents a vivid and true picture of his land. Karanth's *Marali Mannige* has appeared in an English translation and is entitled *Back to the Soil*. Another of our novelists, A. N. Krishna Rao, has so many books to his credit—not all of them good—that he bids fair to rival the output of Edgar Wallace. As a novelist, his captivating conversation and his scholarship have become proverbial in literary circles and his *Sandhyaraga* even today holds a high place among Kannada novels. Of the many novels written by him during the period under review, *Natasarvabhoutma* (Actor King) has special merit. It depicts the life of an actor. It has an inspiring story which is well blended with excellent characterization and is written in a lucid and captivating style. Even though some situations appear to be too naked, the presentation is artistic and the truth behind them lovely and appealing. The book yields interesting glimpses of the Kannada stage and its development and relates how an actor, taking the drama as his medium, can build an ideal society if he possesses the aspiration and the energizing qualities. Opinions regarding this novel have not been quite uniform. One feels, however, that the reader needs a certain background to consider the contents in the proper light and to apprehend the undercurrents flowing through the book.

Shapa (Curse) by V. M. Ināmdar is yet another novel which gives a true and sensitive portrayal of a soul which struggles with the influence of heredity on temperament, phys-

ical make-up and character. The hero is depicted as the victim of forces over which he has had no control and is portrayed in a simple but appealing way.

The rising young novelists of the day include Basavaraja Kattimani, Kulukunda Shiva Rao, Krishnamurthi Puranika, K. Aswathanarayana Rao, M. V. Sitaramiah and Shrimati Indirabai. The works of Basavaraja Kattimani and Kulukunda Shiva Rao abound in sarcasm and pungent satire, vigour and appeal. Krishnamurthi Puranika, K. Aswathanarayana Rao and M. V. Sitaramiah are clear in their analysis of modern life without any trace of the cynicism which mars such efforts. *Channabasavanayaka*, a historical novel by Masti Iyengar, pioneers work in this *genre*. In this book, historical accuracy is strictly maintained and facts are not twisted to fit the demands of fiction. *Mahabrahmana* by Shri Devudu, the most outstanding novel of the period under review—if not the most outstanding novel of the century—is the story of Viswamitra. It deals with the conflict between social and communal groups and that loss of faith in the sublime heritage of the country which threatens the soul of India today. The essence of Vedic philosophy is symbolically represented in the shaping of the *Gayatri mantra*. Viswamitra creates this *mantra* for the upliftment of the whole of mankind without distinction of caste or creed. This incantation is taught to non-brahmins and non-Aryans also, thus handing over the key to the gates of the abode of *Atmabrahman*. The author visualizes a classless society and he feels that this is possible to establish only by elevating the lower to the levels of the higher. The story is full of colour and, although the canvas is very large, the picture which emerges is clear and vivid. The reader is transported to Vedic times and loses himself in the serenity of that elevating atmosphere. Devudu creates only when the urge is in him, following the injunction that "The artist must surrender his will, subdue his emotions, draw in all his thoughts and concentrate on the eternal reality." In Devudu and his *Mahabrahmana*, Kannada literature has reached a stage it had never reached before. It is capable of lifting the least of us to the sublimest heights of courage and achievement,

heights that the gods themselves might envy in many ways.

Other historical novels include *Nagaradarani* by Shri Veerakesari and *Nrupatunga* by M. N. Murthy. Detective stories and novels continue to be produced in increasing numbers, M. Rama Murthy being the best exponent of this form.

The plays which appeared during this period cannot be classified as significant contributions either to literature or the stage. The emphasis has been on entertainment and some good specimens of this are available. Writers like Ksheerasagara, Kaivar Raja Rao, Parvatavani, Chidam Sadashiviah, Masti Iyengar, "P.T.N." and Ramachandra Sharma have concentrated on other topics and conducted some interesting experiments in this direction.

The year 1949 was a year of great rejoicing for the Kannadigas as the entire province celebrated the 1,000th anniversary of our great poet Ranna on that day. His *Gadayuddha* renders an episode from the *Mahabharata* in which Bhima and Duryodhana meet at last in mortal combat and the latter meets his death. The astonishing power of the poet to evoke heroic emotions, his genius for expression and, best of all, the dramatic element in the *kavya* were brought to the attention of the present generation in its most vivid form when the late B. M. Srikantia gave us a dramatic rendering of the classic in *Gadayuddha Natakam*. When this play was presented by the well-known amateur group, the United Artists of Bangalore, it set a new standard in dramatic production and infused a new spirit and enthusiasm among the amateurs. The people who witnessed the play said that the entire atmosphere was charged with the spirit of Ranna. The same group is now contemplating an all-India festival of drama and a competition in all Indian languages in which handsome prizes are being offered to the best producers as well as playwrights, since so much depends on good production.

The Kannada stage centenary held in 1948 is yet another feature worthy of mention. A commemoration volume has been published and is dedicated to His Highness Shri Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, Rajapramukh of Mysore, as a token of loyalty

since the Mysore palace and the royal family have played a significant role in the foundation and development of the modern Kannada stage.

There has been an abundant output of poetry during the period under review. Veteran poets like Bendra, Puttappa, V. Sitaramiah, Gokak and others continue to provide inspiration through their works. Modern poetry also has its adherents, Shri Diga and Shri Sharma being among the leaders.

In "Ekkundi," among the younger poets, we see a happy blending of both the old and new schools of thought. The influence of the *Ramayana* on regional languages has been one of the important subjects of discussion at this Conference. I feel I would be fairly failing in my duty if I did not take note in this connection of K. V. Puttappa's *Ramayana Darshana*. Published in two huge volumes, covering in all 900 pages, the story of Rama and his message is retold in rhythmic poetry, charged with a special charm which is Puttappa's own. Shri Puttappa has not departed much from Valmiki, but he has introduced much modern philosophical thought into the work. Along with *Pampa Ramayana* (12th century), *Torave Ramayana* (15th century), *Ramayana Darshana* is an indication of the perennial value of this great epic and of its message for generations on end. Time and again we have found refuge in the ideals of this great classic and peace in its lofty and inspiring philosophy.

Juvenile literature is being produced, though in limited quantities, by various writers including Hoyisala, B. S. Panduranga Rao, B. Shankara Bhatta, Rama Moleyar and others. Interesting and colourful reading for children is provided by two new magazines entitled *Chandamama* and *Balamitra*.

Kannada literature has not advanced very far in the sphere of essay-writing, humour or literary criticism.

Books on science, industry, trade, commerce, medicine and such subjects are beginning to make an appearance. The history of Kannada literature has been dealt with in two books entitled *Kannada Sahitya Vauhini* and *Kannada Sahitya Charitre*. While the former, written by N. K. Kulkarni, gives

us a bird's-eye view, the latter, written by R. S. Mugali, gives us a wider and more comprehensive picture of the subject. Another such publication is *Indian Poetics* by T. N. Srikantiah, which along with *Haridasara Krutigalu* by R. S. Panchamukhi provides valuable material for students of literature.

Rannana Gadayuddha Aairavata and *Kabbigarakava* and a few reprints of the works of ancient poets have been edited and published. Translations from Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and other sister languages have added grace to Kannada literature. A fine selection of stories from China has also been published. *Vachana Bharata* and *Kathamruta* are two happy additions to our literature by A. R. Krishna Sastry, that great scholar, literary guru and master of Kannada prose. *Ranganna Kanasina Dinagalu* (Dream Days of Ranganna) deals with the experiences of a school inspector who has been dreaming of a renaissance in education and the uplift of the rustic, and in *Jadabharata* his conception of the goal of life is revealed through narration of the dreams seen by him from time to time. The narration is in simple but effective prose.

Biographies are written mostly with an eye to the requirements of the textbook committee. *My Father* by Shri Radhakrishna is an exception, embodying as it does a sincere effort on the part of a son to give a true and modest picture of an interesting personality. *Hucchumanassina Hattu Mulhagalu* by Karanth, an autobiographical survey of life, men and matters also has merits.

Though necessarily slight, journalism has played some part in the development of literature during the past few years. Barring a few weeklies and dailies, the rest are struggling for existence. For example, *Mahaveera*, a literary monthly which struggled along for a year or so, stopped publication with a deficit balance of a few thousand rupees. It has, however, been resurrected recently. In spite of the difficulties and handicaps our journals have to face one is happy to note that weeklies and even dailies have, of late, been reserving more space for literary articles than in previous years. *Jana-*

pragati, a weekly, and *Prajavani*, a daily, have taken the lead in this direction.

Kannada literature has sustained a heavy loss in the deaths of M. R. Sreenivasa Murthy, D. K. Bharadvaj, Rajapurohit Basavanal, Channamallappa Halasangi and Rajagopalakrishna Rao. They infused enthusiasm for their art into the younger generation of their times and contributed much to the shaping of modern Kannada literature. The very premature deaths of Shrimati Belagere Janakamma and D. N. Ramu have cut short two careers of great promise in the world of letters.

Some interesting as well as dubious experiments in publishing have been carried out in recent years. Some ventures were launched with the object of exploiting the writers in this country and making money. Now a new phase has been started with the publication of a pocket-book series. The immediate result of this venture appears to be encouraging. Taking their cue from the first series, the Vauhini Pocket Books, nearly a dozen others have sprung up. Observers experienced in the publishing line feel that this activity will ultimately culminate in a gamble for money. The reader, no doubt, stands to gain if he gets his books cheaply. But if the writer suffers thereby all such activity should be ruthlessly suppressed. One hopes, however, that sooner or later the business will be stabilized and lead to the production of substantial, useful, serious, thought-provoking and standard literature that will endure and inspire mankind.

It is only a mind at peace that can work in the right direction. If the writer is saved from starvation and not compelled to become an instrument for political propaganda he will have both the courage and the peace of mind which he needs to attain his destiny.

In conclusion I should like to quote a message sent by Shrimati Sophia Wadia to a short-story-writers' conference:—

The land of Kannada has a smile of her own and her face is Bangalore, the beautiful. So Kannada story-tellers assembled there should have a happy time. May their flights of fancy charge the atmosphere with light as well as delight.

PROGRESS OF MAITHILI LITERATURE (1948-53)**PROFESSOR K. K. MISHRA**

During the period 1948-53, three main tendencies may be observed in Maithili literature. They are: first, the coming of the younger generation of Maithili writers to the fore, armed with a firm determination to serve the cause of Maithili; secondly, attraction of many non-Maithili-speaking people towards Maithili; and thirdly, a mass awakening amongst Maithili-speaking people to unite and to preserve their language, literature and culture. The prominence of younger writers is due to the fact that the circumstances needed a band of workers to enrich Maithili literature fully and speedily. The second development was spontaneous, as the inhabitants of Mithila, though imbued with Mithila's culture, wrote in other languages, and were now attracted by the charm of compositions in Maithili and hence began contributing to Maithili. It is encouraging that such writers are now occupying a high position in Maithili literature. The mass awakening may be traced to the still apathetic attitude of the State and Central Governments. This mass consciousness can no longer be arrested and if our rights are not conceded by the governments concerned, many unforeseen events may happen. Language and culture cannot die and any attempt to uproot these is most regrettable and serves but to strengthen their cause.

Both inside and outside Mithila, centres of Maithili have grown up. Important among them are—in Mithila: Janakpur Dham (Nepal), Bahera, Sarisavapath, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Supaul, Madhipura, Muzaffarpur, Begusarai, Patna; and outside Mithila—Maldah (W. Bengal), Allahabad, Banaras, Kanpur, Calcutta, Ajmer, Agra and Dohad (Baroda). In Janakpur Dham (Nepal) a branch of the All-India Maithili Sahitya Parishad has been founded under the expert guidance of Pandit Jivnatha Jha. Several Maithili manuscripts have been discovered through his efforts. Several informative brochures in Maithili have been published by the Centre re-

lating to Sanskrit, the historic importance of Janakpur and other matters. The Bahera Centre has a number of renowned scholars of Maithili such as Kavi Churamani Shri Mashup, Dr. Braj Kishore Verma and others. The Bahera school have an independent association of their own known as the Satdala Sahitya Sangh which is a strong force these days. Sarisavapath is as strong a centre of Maithili as Bahera. Shri Manmohan Jha is the leading figure and under his guidance more than two dozen Maithili writers are working today. In Madhubani, Professor Budhidhari Singh Ramaker has developed a large circle of Maithili lovers and writers who meet at regular intervals and are enriching Maithili literature. Darbhanga is the main pivot. The All-India Maithili Sahitya Parishad, All-India Maithili Mahasabha, Vaidehi Samiti, Vidyapati Gosthi, Maithili Mandir, Kaladhari Trust, Harinandan Singh Memorial Trust, Zilla Sahityakar Sangh, are but a few organizations which are advancing the cause of Maithili and have achieved much success in the field. The Supaul and Madhipura Centres have in a way infused new life into the Maithili-speaking people of Bhagalpur, Saharsa and Purnea Districts. The study of Maithili on a scholarly level, as well as on a mass scale, is confined at present to these districts. In Begusarai (Monghyr) Professor Radhakrishna Choudhary is developing a centre of Maithili and has done much work. With the growing importance of Maithili, Patna has become another great centre of Maithili through the efforts of Babu Shri Lakshmipati Singh, a fellow P.E.N. Member.

Outside Mithila, the Calcutta and Maldah Centres are striking. Calcutta has a number of energetic organizations like the All-India Maithil Sangh, Calcutta Kshatra Sangh, Prabudha Kshatra Samiti and others. In Maldah, the late Pramathnath Mishra had founded a unique organization for the consolidation of Mithila's culture and language. Allahabad is holding its force intact due to the ever-increasing enthusiasm of the family of MM. Dr. Umesha Mishra, M.A., D.LITT. Not a single day passes when his worthy sons are not found to have contributed something to Maithili literature. Such is the undaunted spirit of this illustrious family of Mithila.

Kanpur, Dohad (Baroda), Ajmer and Agra are other centres worth mentioning, where Sir Hargovinda Mishra, Shri Veda Mitra Mishra, Shri Raghunath P. Mishra and Shri Brajnandan Jha, respectively, are upholding the cause of Maithili.

These Centres have been supported by numerous journals and periodicals published from different places. Among those published during 1948-53, are *Mithila Mihir*, *Vaidehi* and *Swadesha*, all from Darbhanga; *Pallav*, *Kiran* and *Mithila-Jyoti* from Patna; *Mithila* from Laheriasarai, *Mithila-Darsan* and *Mithila Sevak* from Calcutta; *Batuk* from Allahabad; *Krishna Bhawan Patrika* from Banaras. Besides these, there were a number of handwritten magazines.

The *Mithila Mihir* is the oldest Maithili weekly, published since 1907. It is edited by Pandit Surendra Jha "Suman" and has upheld the cause of Maithili with great vigour and success. *Vaidchi* was founded and edited by Professor Krishna Kant Mishra since 1940 from Sitamarhi (Muzaffarpur) as a fortnightly magazine. *Vaidehi* created a new school of writers and encouraged young scholars to write profusely. At first it did not have wide publicity and Professor Mishra had to bear heavy financial losses, owing to which the publication had to be suspended twice; but since September 1952 it is published regularly as a monthly and is the only Maithili periodical which is available on Wheeler bookstalls. *Swadcsa*, a good journal meant for the intelligent, was a monthly edited by Pandit Surendra Jha, but stopped publication after six issues. The articles were of a very high standard. *Pallav*, *Kiran* and *Mithila-Jyoti* were edited respectively by Professor Sailendra Mohan Jha, Shri Yatri and Babu Durgapati Singh. *Pallav* failed for lack of organization; *Kiran* for lack of financial backing; and *Mithila-Jyoti* for lack of a good editor. *Batuk* from Allahabad catered for children only. It was very popular but it ceased publication after three years owing to its inability to make a direct approach to young boys and girls. It is heartening to hear that it is resuming publication shortly. *Krishna Bhawan Patrika* from Banaras was a bi-annual magazine which could not prosper as the editor had to leave Banaras suddenly. *Mithila-Darshan* is the of-

ficial organ of the Calcutta Maithil Sangh and is published monthly though the standard is not very good. *Mithila*, a weekly, was started by Dr. Lakshman Jha from Laheriasarai on December 15th, 1952, but unfortunately ceased publication on August 17th, 1953. It created a stir in the whole of Mithila because of its active participation in political activities but probably failed to receive appreciation from the public in general and that is why it had to be stopped. At the close of 1953 an announcement of the publication of two magazines *Chaupari* and *Mithila Sevak* was made. The reasons for the failure of these journals are the same as those obtaining in other languages, namely, lack of co-operation between the editor, the proprietor and the press. If all these stand together, there is no reason why a paper should not flourish. From Muzaffarpur, very shortly, a daily paper will be published. The *Pravasi* people have a number of magazines such as *Jeevan Prabha*, *Maithil Bandhu* and so on.

Coming to our literary productions, we can safely assert that every branch of Maithili literature, except criticism, has progressed substantially. A fairly large number of short stories have been published; some of them are indeed excellent and show depth of scholarship and imagination. Professor Hari-mohan Jha is the leading short-story-writer of the day. His publications include *Rang Shala*, *Khattar Kaka Tarang* and *Tirth Yatra*. In ironical and humorous language he portrays the evils of society and suggests measures for improvement. They are very appealing and have received a great deal of appreciation from readers of all types. Professor Umanatha Jha's *Rekha Chitra* is a collection of pen-portraits written in a novel style in Maithili. "*Jhotia Pakari*" by Shri Radha-krishna is a good study of inanimate things. His stories are very realistic and are up to the mark. Professor Sailendra Mohan Jha is another successful short-story-writer. In his "*Navina and Rajani*" he shows the difference between an unsophisticated village girl and one who is town-bred. Professor B. N. S. Thakur's *Malik Barh Bhukh* and *Lalasa* are not of a high standard. Shri Manmohan Jha has published two collections, *Ashru Jan* and *Sanchaita*. The former contains

his own collection of short stories and the latter those from the pens of other eminent short-story-writers. "*Hunak Chitti*" in *Sanchaita* is a very realistic and touching story. Professor Krishna Kant Mishra has also published three collections *Galpanjali*, *Chainika* and *Hamar Dosar Bibha*. *Galpanjali* is a standard collection and a few short stories like "*Rail ka Anubhava*" and "*Bhatti*" are worth reading. *Chainika* was published in 1953 and is representative in character. His "*Hamar Dosar Vibah*," published in 1948, is an elementary attempt at short-story-writing. Shri Upendra Nath Jha "Vyas" has collected the short stories written by him for various magazines and published them in book form under the title *Vidambana*. His entire collection shows depth of imagination and great literary skill. Professor Tantranatha Jha has summarized the great plays of the world in different languages in short-story form in Maithili. They are very interesting and will be of immense value to our young folk.

In Kulananda Nandan's short story "*Paighatwek Nisan*," one finds a passionate plea for social justice. Mathur, Shekhar and Bhramar are other prominent short-story-writers who present a realistic picture of society and appeal for the uplift of the down-trodden. Babu Shri Lakshmipati Singh displays a penchant for the old type of plot and hence is not very popular. A new and forceful writer is Dr. Vrajkishore Verma whose thoughts and descriptions are remarkable and commendable. His "*Balgovind*" is a picture of a typical unsophisticated farmer. Shri Yatri, known in Hindi as "Nagarjun," is more successful as a documentary writer than as a short-story-writer. His *Burha Boko* is an outstanding example of this. He can inspire admiration and hatred at the same time. He writes in the language of the masses and hence is very widely read. *Katha Mukhi*, edited by Professor Surendra Jha and *Amaka Jalakhari* published by Pustak Bhandar, Laheria-sarai, are very interesting collections.

Jainarain Mallick, Govind Jha, Lilita, Harihar Jha, Mayanand Mishra, Rajeshwar Thakur, Yoganatha Jha, Singh Bandhu, Ramakant Mishra, Shyamanand Jha, Parmeshwar Mishra, Babujee Jha are a few of the promising short-story-

writers. Mayanand Mishra's *Bhanga ka Lota* is an attempt to follow in the footsteps of Professor Hari Mohan Jha. Mention may be made of a number of other energetic young writers from whom much can be expected in the near future. Their spirit, enthusiasm and love for short-story-writing are impressive and likely to achieve much if given right direction. These include Dhireswar Jha, Kedarnatha Mishra, Ramdeva Jha, Ganganatha Jha, Indrakumar Jha, Ugranarain Mishra, Yoganatha Jha, Budhinatha Mishra, Gaurishankar Jha, Raghunatha Singh Thakur, Yadunatha Jha, Gokulnatha Jha, Jeebu, Shivanandan Mishra and others.

The late Pandit Janardan Jha "Jansidan" published *Vidhava-Vilap* in verse which is very popular among Mithila's folk. *Mithila-Bhasha-Kissa-Sangrah*, *Seeta-Dai*, *Kissa-Pihani*, *Narottam-Katha* are collections which belong to juvenile literature.

Noteworthy novels have been written by Professor Sailendra Mohan Jha, Chandranatha Mishra "Amar," Gangapati Singh, Badrinarain Das, Indranarain Jha, Vidyadhar Mishra and Chaturanand. Sailendra Mohan Jha's *Pratima* aims at a new angle. Another good novel is Amara's *Vir Kanya*. It is worth reading and instructive. In fact this type of novel should be encouraged. Badrinarain Das's *Chandra Kala* could not gain much appreciation as its language is very defective. Chaturanan is yet another novelist, worth reading. Pandit Vidyadhar Mishra has written a short novel *Nirmala* depicting the social life of Mithila. The dearth of first-rate novels in Maithili is due to the fact that there is no appreciation of novels on modern life, and people in general prefer traditional themes in the novels.

Coming to the essay, we find a variety of subjects being discussed. The literary essays of Durgadhar Jha, Trilokanatha Mishra and Upendra Jha are written in a very simple style on deeply philosophical subjects. We may mention here Pandit Trilokanatha Mishra's *Veda-Digadarshan Sangeeta Shastra* and Durgadhar Jha's *Sankhya-Karika-par-Bichar* in this context. *Jarvadi Bichar-Dhara* and other essays by Gopaljee Jha

and *Kala-Evam-Kavyakala-ka-Utakarsha* by Professor G. N. S. Thakur belong to the same category. Babu Kshemdhari Singh's *Daya Thatha Audarya* is an analysis of the qualities of man.

Religious essays written by Madhav Jha Shastri, Sitarām Jha and Jivanand Thakur relate to discussions on matters connected with our ancient *shastras* while *Mithila men Shivaratri* by Modanatha Mishra, *Ramanavami Vrata* by Shardananda Mishra and *Phagua-ka-Prasasti* by Lakshmipati Singh throw light on the origin and development of religious festivals. Essays by Dr. J. K. Mishra, Dr. Umesha Mishra and Pandit Tejanatha Jha add to the growth of knowledge and are very thoughtful. Biographical essays on *Gangadhar Mishra* by Professor Vishwanatha Jha, on *Munsi Raghunandanlal Dass* and *MM. Parmeshwara Jha* by Baldeva Mishra Jyotishi and on *MM. Balbodha Mishra* by Ramchandra Mishra are very interesting and informative.

Some revealing research papers like *Tulsikrit Ramayanaki Lokapriyata* by Dr. Ramashis Thakur, *Bhartiya Ganitaka Paschim Prayan* by Professor Parmakant Chaudhary, *Kavikamood* by Principal Benimadhava Mishra and *Bishaphi-Mahatmaya* by Professor Ramanatha Jha are of a very high standard.

Coming to social essays, Dr. Umesha Mishra has contributed a series on *Maithil Sanskrit O Sabhyata* in which he has stressed the specialities of Maithili culture. He has explained that by the word *Maithil* all the inhabitants of Mithila are meant and not only Maithil Brahmins. In *Panjec-Sahitya* Professor Ramanatha Jha stresses the importance of the existence of *Panjecs* in Mithila's culture. Dr. H. Goswami in his essay *Bengal Par Mithila ka Prabhaba* has shown the influence of Mithila over Bengali society. *Pawn-Tihar* by Babu Gangapati Singh depicts the customs and manners of Mithila. Dr. Verma's essays on *Pathaka Chahi*, *Yambant Chahi*, *Lekhaka Din* makes a direct approach to Maithili scholars. His essay *Lorika-Vijaya* speaks of the rich treasure of *Loriks* available in Maithili alone. A number of essays on economic aspects of Mithila were published during this period. *Udyoga Vanijya* by Pro-

fessor L. N. Singh, *Bhumi Samasya* by Ramanandan Mishra, the ex-President of Maithili Sahitya Parishad, are noteworthy.

A move was made during these years to write on political subjects also. For example, "*China-ka-Chunava*," "*America-ka-Rashtra Niti*," "*Shri Dulcka Asia Paryatan*"—all these were published in the weekly *Mithila*. Historical essays like *Govind Dass ka Diha* by Professor Ramanatha Jha and *Lakshmanpur* by Markandeya Jha are noteworthy. Prose works like *Sanskriti* by Baldeva Mishra, *Mithila Men Shiksha* by Professor L. N. Singh, *Mithila Acharadarsa* by Muktinath Mishra and *Prema* by Ugranarain Mishra are worth mentioning. A new type of writing which has appeared during this period is known as *Sahityaka Kharara*; it consists of letters which give many details and facts about contemporary events. They are worth publishing especially when written by eminent Maithili scholars.

Professor T. N. Jha is one of our best playwrights. His *Ekanki Chaicnika* is a collection of one-act plays. It shows his ability for writing on every aspect of life. He is a poet, story-writer and essayist thrown into one. Pandit Trilokanatha Mishra is another dramatist of repute. His *Naganand Natak* is much akin to Sanskrit. *Ferar* is another good play, written on the 1942 Movement by Pandit Shardanand Jha. Pandit Jivanand Thakur has written *Bhasa Natakavali* during this period. *Mithila Gandharva Vibah* of Damodar Jha claims to be an original Maithili play. Dr. Vraj-kishore Verma has written several one-act plays of which "*Harshi*" and "*Udanaka Grih Agaman*" are heart-rending. Professor Harimohan Jha's "*Ayachi Mishra*" is a popular play. On the occasion of the 14th All-India Oriental Conference as many as 24 one-act plays were submitted in Maithili. Dr. J. K. Mishra has claimed Sankardeva's *Rukamaniharan Nat* published by Professor P. D. Goswami from Gauhati as a Maithili drama. Much has yet to be said about Assamese plays in Maithili. Other writers include Yadunatha Thakur, author of *Dahej*, Parmeshwar Mishra, author of *Tribeni*, and Professor Krishna Kant Mishra, author of *Atmamaryada*. The *Maithili Prahasans* of Amar and Mani-

padma (Dr. Verma) are famous.

In poetry Professor Surendra Jha "Suman" is a versatile genius. His three books—*Archana*, *Pratipada* and *Sawan Bhadava* provide the finest specimens of modern Maithili poetry. None could excel him. His imagination, thought and expression are remarkable. Kavi Churamani (Shri Kashikant Madhupa) is a well-known poet. His compositions are of a very high order. *Jhankar* and *Satdal* are among his best works. He has written a beautiful *Mahakavya* on Vidyapati's life, which is being published by the All-India Maithil Mahasabha. In recent years he has written a very fine poem—"Ham Apan Daruna Dukha San Chupachap Satata Kanaita Rahaita Chei"—which when read aloud holds the audience spellbound.

Professor Ishanatha Jha is another poet of repute. His poems written during the period under review are very few in number. His *Abhyarthana* illustrates the peculiarities of his style. Another great asset to our literature is Shri Atri. So far he has been writing mainly in Hindi, but owing to the awakening of popular interest in Maithili he has given us very good poems in that language. *Chitra* is the title of his first collection of poems in Maithili. Every poem in it has its own significance. He has heralded a new style in Maithili. He writes in free verse and on common subjects. Other poems include *He Abhagal Desha*, *Sinuriya Am* and *Anhar Jindgi*. The last one is very thoughtful and has been translated into various Indian languages. Kavivar Arsif Prasad Singh is also a Hindi poet but, if I am not exaggerating, his Maithili poems such as *Bhramar Geeta* and *Kanha ka Geeta* are better than his Hindi poems. It may be noted here that Hindi writers' using Maithili does not mean in any way that Maithili is a part of Hindi.

Among other eminent poets mention may be made of Kavivar Sitaram Jha and Professor Harimohan Jha, who have written humorous poems like *Nirasan Mama* and *Garibanika Barhamasa*, and of Vyas, the author of *Sanyasi*, *Sharda Vijaya* and *Manbhum*.

Other poems written by the following are worth mentioning: Professor S. K. Mishra (*Agraduta* and *Meruprabha*),

Amar (*Yuga Chakra*), Radhakrishna (*Tarera*), Vermajee (*Deva Uthan*), Ananda Jha (*Rasnirjharni*), Mohan (*Jan-jeewan*), Kishun (*Koshika Barhi*). Sekhar (*Kamala*), Professor Ramakar (*Amar Bapu, Avesha* and *Chasaka*), Govind (*Teena Tamasha*), Jainarain Mallick (*Antarvedaha*), Mathur (*Krishaka*), Sailendramohan Jha (*Swadesha Bandana*), Jiwnatha Jha (*Kalapna*), Raghava (*Kishan*), Dhanukadhari Dass (*Rupaiv Raj*), Ramachandra Pandey (*Chetna*), Kamala Mukerjee (*Dulingayya*).

Some poets of our younger generation have been very successful, among them Adyanatha Jha, "Nirankusha," Jagadeepanarain Deepak Balgovind Lal, Mayanand, Jeebu, Taruna, Gopaljee Jha, Indu, Ramachandra Rai, Shardananda Dass, Parmanand Jha, Nanu Jha, Rambriksha Singh, Bhawanatha Jha, Ramkrishna Jha, Ramananda Lal Renu, Ganeshwar Jha and others. Nationalistic poems and poems on current affairs have been composed in Maithili, among them being *Bhumidan Yagna, Nehru, Bapu* and so on. The first edition of Lal Dass's *Ramayan* and the revised edition of Chanda Jha's *Ramayan* were published during this period. The second edition of Manbodha's *Krishna Janam* was also published. In 1953, Dr. B. B. Majumdar and Shri Khagendra Nath Mitra published in Bengali and Hindi all the available poems of Vidyapati Thakur. Dr. Majumdar has done monumental work on Vidyapati but could not do justice to the interpretation of his poems. A Maithili edition of the poems by a Maithil scholar is absolutely necessary.

We have had a sufficient number of books on grammar during this period, the best of them being Mahavaiyakaran Pandit Dinabandhu Jha's *Mithila Bhasha Vidyotan* and *Dhatu Patha*, which have been accepted by Indian scholars as the most authoritative and scientific in any language in India. On *alankar*, Pandit Ridhinatha Jha has published his *Vishwa Bhushan*. The *Alankar Darpan* of Sitaram Jha has also been published. The *Lokokati Prakasha* is a good collection of Maithili proverbs.

Many critical studies in Maithili were undertaken during these years. Dr. Umesha Mishra's *Vidyapati Thakur*, Bal-

deva Mishra's *Chanda Jha*, Professor Ramanatha Jha's critical study on many Maithili authors, Professor S. K. Mishra's *Maithili men Upanyas*, Professor Ramakar's *Maithili Sahitya ka Sarasta*, Shri Chandra Kumar Jha's *Maithili Loka Geeta*, Dr. Suryakant's *Kavi Raghavak Kala*, Professor Sailendra Mohan Jha's critical appreciation of Maithili poetry, are only a few of our critical analyses of Mithila's folk literature.

Translation has also been done in Maithili from Sanskrit, Bengali, English, French and Russian. Shrimati Kamala Mukherjee has translated a Russian poem composed on an 11-year-old girl's experiences in prison. Shri Radhakrishna has translated the works of the French author Alphonse Daudet; Professor Umanatha Jha, the works of Dorothy Parker; and Shri Govind Jha, Shelley's poems. The translation of the *Uttar-ramcharitra* of Bhavabhuti by Shyamsundar Jha deserves special mention. Bankim Chandra's and Sarat Babu's novels have also been translated. The translations are faithful.

A few interesting accounts of travel are also available in Maithili, such as Jainarain Mallik's *Dakshin Yatra*, Amar's *Bishaphi Yatra*, Pandit Baldeva Mishra Jotishi's *Maithil Mahasabhaka Anubhava* and others. They give impressions of the author's travels. Work has also been done towards the reformation and preservation of the Maithili script. Dr. Umesha Mishra has completed his book on the Maithili script and alphabet after a good deal of study. Professor Ramanatha Jha is publishing the result of his research on the Maithili script with the help of manuscripts available to him. In an article, Pandit Baldeva Mishra has revealed that the Tiruhta or Maithili script is also used in Tibet. The Maithili script is now a compulsory subject of study in all classes from Matriculation onwards.

Juvenile literature has also been enriched. Notable writers' publications in this respect include Suman's *Sanesa*, Nandipat Dass's *Nena Bhut ka* and *Bacha Khelaita Achhi*, Thakur Shastri's *Bilare*, Vyas's *Aksharmala*, Govind Jha's *Re Musari*, Indira's *Devi Paripakar*, Ganipat Mishra's *Amak Jhakka* and Sudhakant Mishra's *Hakar*.

Histories and surveys of Maithili literature have been published during these years. Dr. Jayakanta Mishra's *History of Maithili Literature* in two volumes is an outstanding work. Kumar Gangananad Singh's *Maithili Sahitya ka Pragati* is a remarkable survey. Some histories of Mithila were written and planned such as Shri Upendra Thakur's and Shri Vijyakanta Mishra's *Cultural and Political History of Mithila*, Dr. L. Jha's *Mithila, a Union Republic* and *Mithila in India* and Professor K. K. Mishra's *History of Mithila*. Professor S. N. Mishra is finishing the *History of the Karnatak Kings of Mithila*. Professor Sailendra Mohan Jha has written a *Cultural History of Mithila* while Babu Janakinandan Singh has compiled an authoritative *History of Mithila*. Vijayakant Mishra's history is not original. Scattered material on the subject is available in the works of Rai Bahadur Sushil Kumar Roy, Dr. Umesha Mishra, Professor Ramanatha Jha, Professor Radhakrishna Chaudhary and Pandit Harishchandra Mishra Mithilendu. M. Illiyas Rahmani has written in Maithili the history of Darbhanga while Chetakar Jha has published an economic history of India under the title *Bharata-varsha*.

The number of women writers in Maithili is on the increase. The best-known are Vashundhara Devi, author of "*Jar-jataka Saree*," Vimala Devi, of "*Maugi and Purusha*," Indira Devi, of "*Anmela Vibah*," Shyama Devi, of "*Nava Prabhat*," Usha Rani Jha, of "*Swapana*," Swarna Prabha, of "*Teshar Chitti*" and many others.

The problems facing Maithili are many, such as the inclusion of Maithili in the Indian Constitution, from which it has been left out owing to what one might term an oversight; a Radio Station in the heart of Mithila to cater to the needs of Maithili-speaking people; the immediate publication of a Maithili daily; representation in the Working Committee of the Sahitya Akademi and Sangita Natak Akademi; inclusion as one of the State Languages of Bihar as Marathi and Hindi have been included in Madhya Pradesh; organization of *Pravasi* Maithils; publication of Maithili works hitherto unpublished; and so on.

In conclusion I may add that the love of their mother-tongue felt by over 20,000 Maithili speakers all over India has encouraged young and old Maithili writers to do much during the last six years, and I am sure that this new awakening will contribute much in bringing fruitful results in the near future.

THE PROGRESS OF MALAYALAM LITERATURE (1948-1954)

SHRI G. SANKARA KURUP

A vast and rich field, the literature of Kerala reaches back a thousand years and more, with a pattern of development very similar to that of other South Indian languages. Rising from the common Dravidian stock, the language fell early under the influence of Sanskrit, evolving a beautifully mixed texture called *Manipravalam* and budding forth into many kinds of *champus*, devotional songs, and other works, based on Puranic or contemporary themes. Translations of the great Sanskrit epics, dance-drama called *Kathakali*, and dance-songs named *Thullal*, brought literature closer to the common people, while the language itself resolved into a more lucid and familiar style.

Then, towards the end of the last century, the impact of Western literature and the introduction of the printing press marked a romantic renaissance in our literature. Poetry and drama shot forth to greater heights of lyrical intensity, while prose, long neglected as a literary medium, came into its own with essays, novels and short stories after the Western manner. The Romantic Age saw the rise of three poetic stars of the first magnitude, namely Kumaran Asan, Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer and Vallathol Narayana Menon, soon to be followed by G. Sankara Kurup and Changampuzha Krishna Pillai. In the realm of the novel Shri O. Chanthu Menon and Shri C. V. Raman Pillai had already achieved phenomenal success, while the art of the short story had its devotees in a host of zealous young men. But no writer perhaps had the range and

power of Vallathol, the poet, for he was, *par excellence*, the spokesman of nationalism and freedom. Indeed from the early 30's a band of progressives had begun to talk of proletarian literature, class war and economic freedom; but people did not seem to respond as readily as they thrilled to the bugle-call of patriotism and liberation from the foreign yoke.

National Independence appears to have spelt a change in the outlook of our people and literature. The high tide of enthusiasm has been followed by a pleasant weariness of fulfilment, then a shattering of pet hopes and dreams, searchings of the heart, complexities and confusions. The single high note of nationalism has been drowned in a babel of voices smaller, yet persistent. The tragedies of the late war, the dawn of the atomic age in science and the divisions of the world into two spheres of influence ever at grips with each other have profoundly affected our literary centre of gravity. In fact, this is a period in which our life and literature try to regain their bearings, to find a more realistic compromise between the spiritual and materialistic outlooks, art and science, individuality and social consciousness, and diverse political principles. The All-Kerala Literary Academy which is about a quarter of a century old, and which claims wide adherence from different sections and groups, has definitely been a force for good in resolving tangles and knots and in fostering sympathy and understanding among all.

Thinkers and writers of the Gandhian school are trying to adapt their idealism to practical material conditions, and no less a person than the poet Vallathol pointed out in his ode on liberated China that we Indians who pay lip-service to the *Gita* have pathetically failed to give the common man his due. The progressives, in their turn, have come round somewhat from their position of revolutionary adventurousness to a calmer appreciation of the Indian cultural tradition, artistic expression and evolutionary progress towards economic independence. The golden mean between the Gandhian and the Marxist schools of thought has not yet been struck, for there are furious extremists in either camp. But there is a definite swing towards it; and in the poetry of G. Sankara

Kurup, we have probably the best expression of this awareness and sanity with the added glow of imaginative idealism. Shri Kurup is ever fresh and abreast of the times and has a lyrical power and breadth of vision rare among our modern poets.

Speaking of poets, it may be noted that many of the front rank like Nalappadan have more or less retired from the field. Shrimati Balamani Amma continues to give us a reflective mother's healthy idealistic moods through her poems; while Vennikkulom still gives careful artistic expression to traditional concepts of culture. Shri P. Kunjuraman Nair has become reputed for his devotional outlook and descriptive talents. More in the realistic line are the works of younger poets like Vyloppillil, Edasseri, Pala, Akkithom, Olappamanna and P. Bhaskaran; what they lack in spiritual grain is made up by a closer study of the concrete aspects of life, a deeper psychological understanding of human character, a keener insistence on social significance in their poems and a more patient faithfulness to nature in all its diversities of form, tone and colour. Shri N. V. Krishna Warriar, a very original poet, has interested himself in embodying new ideas in the old ballad form. In spite of the advance of science, poets here have lost little of their sense of wonder; still poetry appears to have outgrown its adolescence, evoking as much appreciation as bewilderment. If poetry of outstanding merit has been rare these days, it is due partly to the quiescence following an age of romantic resurgence and partly to the machinations of a set of leftist critics, who were quick to denounce every work that did not toe their narrow line as "bourgeois trumpery and trifle." The inhibitions they caused among writers and the reading public are now wearing away but it may be a long time before our literature gets over the dire effects of the mischief already done and resumes its healthy all-embracing interest in life and nature. Our literary societies and our radio stations at Trivandrum and Kozhikode are endeavouring to bring poetry closer to the common man with recitations, *Kavisammelans* and *Kavithotsavams*; while artistes who conduct *Kathakalkshepams*, with recitations interspersed with proper

interpretations, have perhaps been doing more service than the pandits in making poetry popular.

Criticism has been a flourishing and fruitful branch in Malayalam since the beginning of the present century. Objective critics like Professor P. Sankaran Nambiar, P. Damodaran Pillai and S. Guptan Nair brought into vogue the best principles of Western criticism, while K. Kuttikrishna Marar, an essentially subjective critic and eminent Sanskrit scholar, was noted for his æsthetic convictions, analytical powers and argumentative exposition. Shri A. Balakrishna Pillai, a master of comparative criticism, very unorthodox in his views, leavened the dough with bold new ideas and comments on literary personalities ranging from Goethe to Gorki. Professor Mundasari completed what Shri Balakrishna Pillai began. In getting a grip of concrete ideas, in determining the social content of a work and in adjudging the literary position of a writer among others, he is still without a rival. In Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair, who stands apart from all others, we have the best instance of the scientist-philosopher as literary critic. The psychological approach in criticism is of recent growth in our language, Shri K. Surendran and N. V. Krishna Warriar being two pioneers in the field. Shri Govindankutty Nair and Kunjappa are critics of fine taste, while K. N. Ezuthacchan, a newcomer, is noted for his Marxist leanings.

An important event in literary criticism during the period under survey was the controversy regarding form and content. The argument is perhaps as old as literature itself, and discerning critics of all lands and ages have admitted that form and content are only two indissoluble features of the same organic whole, the work of art. Progressive extremists in their ardour for naturalism, socialist realism and reformist or revolutionary content gave short shift to artistic form and branded all who stood for imaginative fancy, chaste expression and suggestive idiom as slavish traditionalists and formalists. They cared little for artistic presentation and declared that raw meat was wholesome so long as it was meat; while those who conceived literature as fine art first and foremost, dubbed the progressives tractarians and propagandists,

very conveniently forgetting that all good literature is conscious or unconscious propaganda of one kind or another. Much talent and energy were wasted on both sides. Politicians became critics and literary critics metamorphosed into politicians; and in the midst of attacks and counter-attacks, appreciations and denunciations, the value of established poets and writers rose and fell by turns on the literary Stock Exchange. Finally, both parties seem to have perceived the extent of their absurdities and an uneasy truce has been patched up of late. Still, the debate and combat, in spite of much noise and nonsense, appear to have been based on more fundamental literary problems than slogans required and to have served a useful purpose. They have helped to pull the critics out of their pet prejudices, to make the writers more conscious of their artistic and social significance, to purify and stabilize the taste of the reading public. Friendly discussions of literary problems have become a feature of the day, and a symposium of eminent critics forms a regular item in the All-Kerala Literary Academy's annual meetings. Many villages have their own study-groups and Kala Samitis which not only encourage local talent, but invite authors and critics from all over the land to meet and discuss ways and means of making literature more progressive and popular.

The innumerable Kala Samitis, rural and urban, have given a new fillip to prose drama with modern social themes, as, for instance, Edasseri's *Koottukrishni*. The land of the *Kathakali* has a glorious stage tradition, fostered by translations from the Sanskrit drama, imitations from Tamil musical comedies, and many original pieces. *Sandhya*, a piece of lyrical drama in the tradition of Tagore, written by Shri G. Sankara Kurup, deserves special mention. The Kainikkara brothers, very good actors as well as writers, have contributed excellent pieces to the stage. The influence of European immortals like Shaw, Ibsen, Chekhov and Maeterlinck led to the production of modern "problem plays," Shri N. Krishna Pillai's *Bhagnabhavanam* and Shri C. J. Thomas's *Avan Veendum Varunnu* being two commendable works in this sphere. The plays staged by our Kala Samitis are less ambitious than the

serious "problem plays"; they are more familiar, homely and humorous. The common folk love to find on the stage a piece of their own life, recasting and resolving their own difficulties and aspirations. The central Kala Samiti at Kozhikode was only responding to the general enthusiasm when it celebrated a drama festival running for a whole week in September 1953, with prizes for the best pieces and actors. The drama seems to have a glorious future in our language as there is a wealth of good playwrights and actors, and as the public have discovered in the theatre a directness of appeal very different from that of printed matter.

Unlike the drama the production of good short stories appears to have slackened somewhat after the first fine harvest of the 30's and early 40's. The stars inspired by Maupassant and Chekov, Maugham and O'Henry, have now become rather dim, or moved on to realms of more ambitious writing. Still, the technique of story-writing which they perfected has been profitably taken up by younger men like Shri K. T. Mohammed, who won the first prize in India in the World Short Story Contest of 1952. A noteworthy feature of the present-day short story is its sympathetic study and delineation of the lives and customs of hitherto neglected groups like the Christians and Muslims; and Basheer, Karoor, Uroob, Rafi and N. P. Mohammed have been decidedly successful in discovering the common human being under whatever garb he is hidden, and in promoting amity and understanding between different castes and creeds in a land where it is sorely needed. Stalwarts like Thakazhi, Basheer, Kesava Dev and S. K. Pottekat have in the meantime been working at larger canvases, producing novelettes and novels of enduring value. *Odayil Ninnu* by Dev, *Thottiyute Makan* and *Rantidangazhi* by Thakazhi and *Mootupatam* and *Vishkanyaka* by Pottekat have brought the novel abreast of contemporary life and ideas, and have set the ball rolling towards the compilation of greater works in the immediate future. Translations of world masterpieces like Hardy's *Tess*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, Gorki's *Mother* and Pearl Buck's *Good Earth* have meanwhile been

published, enlarging the mental range of readers and whetting their appetite for original works of that timbre.

Travel books, biographies, and "pen-pictures" have been much in vogue of late. A. D. Hari Sarma, Seetharaman and P. K. Parameswaran Nair deserve special mention as biographers of eminence, while Sardar K. M. Panikkar's autobiography, recently published, is a work remarkable for grandeur of theme and lucidity of exposition. We are grateful to this illustrious savant not only for his works in the different fields of our literature, but also for his loving patronage of our letters in the midst of onerous public duties. Coming to the literature of travel, the Sardar's *Apalkaramaya Yatra* and Shri S. K. Pottekat's diaries of experiences in Africa, Europe, and Malaya may be noted as valuable contributions to that section. Books on politics, economics, and sociology by writers like K. P. Kesava Menon, K. Damodaran, C. J. Thomas and M. Govindan have served to meet a long-felt want; while essays in biological science from the pen of Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair and Dr. C. R. Narayanan have had wide reception and recognition.

A series of well-graded children's books on popular science, history, and literature, have been recently prepared and published by Shri Mathew Kuzhuveli. The humorous essay is once more coming into its own, although no writer of the stature of Sanjayan or E. V. Krishna Pillai has appeared. G. Sankara Kurup and the late Professor M. P. Paul have brought in new ferments to the sphere of thought, but the subjective essay seems to be slow in flowering in spite of the large number of literary journals and periodicals. Research in the realms of history, philosophy and philology has found new devotees; Nalappadan's *Arshagnanam*, a comprehensive treatise on Indian philosophy, is a model of its kind. The seven volumes of the history of Malayalam literature compiled by the late Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer stand apart by themselves, forming landmarks in the trackless field of literary and historical research.

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The period under review has been one of preparation and experimentation, of a healthy realism born of a more sober

and scientific outlook on life, of a re-establishment of poise and self-confidence among men of letters. A keener interest in other Indian literatures, especially Hindi, has helped to build up the sense of cultural and national solidarity on a more enduring basis. Translations from our authors have begun to appear in other tongues and there is ample scope for profitable work along these lines. The All-Kerala Literary Academy which has served as a forum for compromise and cultural exchange, recently instituted a committee of translators to take up this venture. But, if there is want of recognition abroad, our writers are finding themselves nearer and dearer to the hearts of people at home. They are beginning to shed their scholarly halo and to feel one with the other workers of the land; and they are earning more wages too, as people have learnt to take an unprecedented interest in literature as something meant for, and belonging to, themselves. An authors' co-operative society recently started at Kottayam, chiefly through the selfless labours of Professor M. P. Paul and Karoor, the short-story-writer, has made the publication and distribution of good books easier and cheaper, and this, together with the helpful "Library Movement" of the Government, has been a boon to authors and readers alike. We believe we can be satisfied with the present and very hopeful of the future.

MARATHI LITERATURE (1948-53)

PROFESSOR M. V. RAJADHYAKSHA

It would be wonderful to assert that with the advent of freedom Marathi literature has blossomed forth into new glories; but it would not quite be a statement of fact. Progress, of course, there has been; but the forms in which it has been most significant had already covered imposing ground and taken a purposeful direction before 1947. Not that such a momentous change in the political climate left literature entirely untouched. That would have been most unnatural. There is in a few writers an awareness of the new

problems posed by Independence and a consequent shift of viewpoint from the romantic to the realistic, from the negative to the positive. But this change is limited in quantity and uncertain in quality and its faltering stimulus has failed to refresh literature as a whole. It would probably be argued that we are still too close to the change to appreciate it fully, and that, in any case, we are being impatient, for such a change is both subtle and slow. I should love to believe it; but I should also, in fairness to myself, wait for more tangible proof.

The urge for political freedom was for long a major inspiration and a recurrent theme in Marathi literature. It expressed itself in many ways and, with an alien censorship, under many disguises. This sense of dedication and resistance imparted virility to literature and a wide appeal as well. The content of that writing had a reality for everyone. Unfortunately, during the 1920's and 30's, another movement was gathering force. Its urge was purely literary—which is a pretty euphemism for an unhealthy obsession with mere form and the inevitable unreality of it all. A great deal of useless industry was solemnly devoted to division and sub-division of literary forms and to putting glossy labels on them. Technique was the magic word. The mechanics of literary creation were made easy for every schoolgirl. Style was polished up to new perfections of inanity. Of course, this decadence seriously perturbed the more intelligent among writers and readers, and a reaction set in. In the late 30's and the early 40's the conflict gradually flared up. It started on the theoretical side, and by the late 40's, and in the period under review, it had spread to the creative side, though not as fully as one would wish. The spruce forces of decadence still hold certain areas. Formwise, it could be affirmed that poetry and the short story have been mostly liberated; in the novel the battle is still raging; the essay, except for an outlying sector, has been a waste for some time, though it was a favourite playground of technique in the 30's; in the theatre, or what little there is of it, the issue is not yet properly resolved. The total picture is rather confused, for with an ambiguous battle-line, the combatants get mixed up. An honest fellow sometimes wobbles

into fine writing, or some mere journeyman of letters surprises you with the genuine article.

It was not just an accident that this conflict should have gathered momentum—and realism should have gained ground—during the period of the last World War. The many tensions of those years were bound to shake the artist out of his affected and self-complacent adolescence, unless he was utterly locked up in his ivory tower and benumbed by it. The war bared many truths, and it put enough nerve into the writer to look at them without shrinking. He became adult, and proceeded to pitch out a great many elegant veils which had bemused him and his like. So many of his darling ideals went with them. They were inextricably entangled in the veils. This process has been working unevenly, sometimes indifferently but it is the focus of our hopes. It started a few years before Independence. Revolt against the false prophets of an earlier day and the war explain its genesis.

There is much that is common to the new movements in Marathi poetry and short-story-writing. They both broke away from conventions so sharply that the wide gap between the old and the new staggered the common reader at first. This was more true in poetry than in the short story. The break was sharper in the former than in the latter. But the robust realism of both—their clear-eyed exploration of life—was compelling enough to wear away the initial resistance in the reader. The essentials of experience, not its superficialities conforming to some fictitious form, are the main concern of these movements. Frills of language, and all the little clevernesses of “technique” were spurned by them.

The new poetry seeks to rouse the reader, not to lull him, and to draw him out to feel the fine edge of the poet's experience. Its imagery is precise, because it is individual and not derived from any common pool. It is directly born of experience, and not contrived by fancy. The poet's complex personality is intimately revealed by it. The revelation is often disconcerting to the prude and to the simple reader who wants his poetry soft. The charge of obscurity against this poetry can be understood. The peculiar quality of its imagery, its

condensed expression and sometimes the very nature of the experience do make the poetry obscure. A poem of this kind does not annotate itself, nor does it gather itself up in a convenient "central idea." The poem is a compact whole. It is the epitome of a mood. In it is a fusion of thought and feeling. But it yields itself to the reader who surrenders himself to it. It irritates the languid reader to whom the reading of poetry is a passive affair, one whose sensitivity has been blunted by long contact with milk-and-water poetry. Another popular charge against this poetry is of obscenity. Apart from the fact that obscenity, like obscurity, is subjective, the refusal of the new poet to observe the taboos of middle-class respectability offends those to whom respectability is far more important than poetry. Sex, as part of the truth of life, enters into the theme or the imagery of this poetry. It is not romanticized in the dear old way. Nor is it used pornographically as an unclean thing to be conveyed through veiled suggestion.

B. S. Mardhekar and P. S. Rege are recognized as the pioneers in this new poetry; yet they are considerably unlike each other. Mardhekar's is the poetry of a sordid environment blighting one's dreams of beauty—almost perverting them into nightmares. Man may or may not be the image of God; but to Mardhekar, the mouse is the image of man—the man of today wrecked by the very process of living. Mardhekar, who once attempted a novel of "the subconscious," is said to prefer images concocted in that awful cauldron. But so do most poets worth the name; only the degree of preference varies. Mardhekar's is a complex "inscape," enriched by wide scholarship and travel. His images fully reflect it. Rege's poems record the rapture of private excitement. The love of woman provokes most of them. The world of men and mice is repudiated. The contemporary scene is effaced. Rege traces his poetical ancestry to certain French and German symbolists, and, nearer home (in space, but not in time), to King Haal's erotic *Gathasaptashati* in Prakrit—a mixed but rather fruitful ancestry. Rege has evoked much admiration, but hardly any emulation. It probably means that he has no tricks. His influence on younger poets has been more diffuse, and much

more indirect, than that of Mardhekar. But none of the distinguished younger poets could be described as a descendant of either of them. Political faith has vitalized the work of many of them. Sharatchandra Muktibodh and Vinda Karandikar have blended profound social content with genuine lyricism. Mangesh Padgaonkar has grown out of his earlier self-conscious sensuous style into a new strength in which one finds a happy integration of his varied poetical excellences. Vasant Bapat has many of the excellences but not their integration, yet. Y. D. Bhavé's earnest attempts at writing in the new vein, particularly in Mardhekar's, are uneven—very often because of blurred or congested imagery.

Not so pronouncedly new in the superficial features, but gifted with the concentration of poetic energy and social awareness of the best in *Navakavya* (the new poetry), A. R. Deshpande ("Aneel") links it up with the best in the older lyric. Almost 20 years ago, he rebelled against the rigidities of prosodic convention and founded free verse. This, too, was a significant freedom, and new poetry, even if it is not directly involved in the debate on prosody, has profited much from it. N. G. Joshi has experimented in prosody very keenly; but this technical interest has not in any way vitiated his quality as a poet of earnest thought. Shrimati Indira Sant's deeply personal lyrics show continuous growth in strength. Kusumagraj, the great favourite of the early 40's, writes little now, and with less of the old fire. Of even older favourites, Yeshwant, now writing for more than 30 years, has kept to his vein bravely, and Borkar, thrown up by the word-intoxicated 30's, is fitfully engaged in composing musical poetry about politics and love. On the other hand, in a Communist poet like Amar Shaikh, the music is of political passion. The beautiful song-quality of the poetry of G. D. Madgulkar has been fully exploited by the films without being corrupted; that of N. G. Deshpande, though much less known, has still kept the freshness of its first blossom of more than 20 years ago. Besides these, many young poets are writing very well, each in an authentic strain. Thus have these few years brought a richer and more varied crop in poetry than any period in the

history of Marathi.

The average reader has been more receptive to the new short story. The first shock of newness was lived down easily; in fact, it almost provided the excitement of novelty to the jaded taste. It was also weakened by being spread over the four different strains of the four leaders of the movement—Gangadhar Gadgil, Arvind Gokhale, P. B. Bhave and Vyankatesh Madgulkar. These writers hardly ever narrate a mere sequence of actions. They get behind an action, sometimes the most trifling, and relate it to the whole man. They dissect experience, looking for the odd elements and contradictions. They are not sentimental, but they are sensitive; and their sympathy for man is not hampered by any code. No region of experience is too dull or too thorny for their zest for exploration; and the quaintnesses they ferret out make the dullest reader sit up. Gadgil is the most eccentric of the four in his manner. His short story has many points of contact with the new poetry, imagism being the most remarkable of them. But subtlety can be overdone, and obscurity can hypnotize a writer—as the less happy of Gadgil's work suggests. Madgulkar writes of the raw life of villages, of its infinite variety. And he writes simply, without the slightest suspicion of any literary or political pose. He has exposed the long-flourishing fraud of romantic pastoralists and of sloppy humanitarians. The other two write of the middle class of the towns.

Besides these, and influenced by them, some more, some less, are many young story-writers of distinct promise. To name a few, Sadanand Rege, with his flair for experiment in the whimsical, Shantaram and Shashikant Punarvasu, with their feeling for character and form, and Ranjit Desai, with his convincing pictures of the more elemental passions of the untamed, assure a fair lease of life to this new-found realism. Goa, with the peculiar flavour of its old-world life and the glamour that its unfortunate and unnatural isolation has given it, has drawn many writers. But most of them were content to exploit it as a colourful background for an escape from the inhibitions of middle-class love. Reacting against this, Mahadeoshastri Joshi stressed the virtues of the simple

people of Goa. This whitewashing zeal, too, hides the truth of Goa, which is still waiting for a realist to portray it.

But all this achievement of the new short story has not extinguished the old type, which, in the hands of most of its practitioners, has been feeble or juvenile. Love stories are, of course, manufactured in plenty, what variety there is being mostly in setting and costume. They continue to be absorbed by the reader who wants to forget his humdrum life. And he is in a majority.

The Marathi novel, curiously enough, has very little to compare with the new life in the short story. Towards the end of the 20's, N. S. Phadke, with his instinct for the neat manipulation of incident and style, achieved great popularity, and founded a pattern of novel, which, he confidently announced, would hold in perpetuity. It has held till now, anyway. Not that it has not been challenged; critics and parodists have derided it all these years. But it has had no rival with a sustained activity to menace its position in the estimation of the common reader. Khandekar and Madkholkar, riding a minor wave of discontent against Phadke's pretty shallowness, made much noise about their own novels being "for life's sake." Politics was, to them, the juiciest thing in "life"; and they injected it into the novel in order to tone it up. In effect, they merely toned up Phadke's popularity, because Phadke cleverly proved that his formula could easily accommodate politics, and prettify it, too. Politics, in fact, provided a platform for love. Khandekar's idealism evoked admiration for some time. It was most sincere. But, lacking a hard core, it was washed out by sentiment and verbiage. Khandekar's output has now weakened much, but not Phadke's. The large sales, during the year under review, of cheap sex and crime fiction probably mean that readers who wanted to be drugged by fiction found even Phadke insipid. But most Marathi novelists with any literary claims whatsoever follow Phadke, openly or furtively.

But not all. The few exceptions are bright enough to justify the hope that the Marathi novel will reach maturity before long. The brightest is S. N. Pendse, whose three novels

published between 1948 and 1952 show a consistent growth in power. These novels limit their background to a small region in North Konkan. But they portray it faithfully. The emaciated life of those obscure villages sometimes throws up sharp conflicts; and those novels have captured such conflicts, and the drama in them. The Hindu-Muslim conflict on the eve of Independence is the theme of *Elgar*, Pendse's first novel. It is treated objectively. It is treated even better in Biwalkar's *Sunecta* (1947), with East Bengal as the background. But the great promise held out by that novel has not been fulfilled. Another unfulfilled promise is of Vibhawari Shirurker's *Balec*, a realistic picture of a Criminal Tribes' Settlement. V. V. Shirwadkar ("Kusumagraj" in poetry), has written two novels, but with indifferent success. They fall into the old trap. They romanticize politics. Mardhekar and Vasant Kanetkar have experimented in fiction without quite striking a rich vein. The aborigines, wasting away in their jungle fastnesses, have attracted some novelists. Mama Warerkar, the great veteran of drama, has enriched fiction not merely by his original work, but even more by his able translations of the novels of Sharatchandra Chatterji. The late Sane Guruji, whose saintliness imparted a halo to his writings—mostly novels and stories—cast a spell on the very young reader with his tear-dripping moralizing. But it lifted soon. While it lasted, however, it threatened to be an unwholesome influence.

The tale of the Marathi stage is tragic. The great enthusiasm induced by the celebration of its centenary in 1943 had raised hopes of an effective revival. They have been partially realized on the amateur side. But the sickness of the professional stage has not been cured. It has been growing worse, if anything. The economics of the theatre are impossible, and even the most careful producers have come to grief. Open-air drama festivals, which often bring together the professional and the amateur, have been very popular. They revive old plays and produce a few new ones, if any are available. But all this success is partly deceptive. It has not put any vigour into the stage, as such. The same could be said about

all the other amateur effort, however earnest—from colleges to the traditional production of a play as part of some religious festival in villages. In the labour area in Bombay, a large number of plays is produced every year. But partly because of the segregation of classes and partly because of the lack of any desire on the part of those producers to get out of the rut, all that activity is dissipated.

Mama Warerkar, that Grand Old Man of Marathi Drama, still towers above his fellows on the strength of his current performance, not merely of his past. He has written four plays since 1948, though one of them, *Bhoomikanya Seeta*, produced in its Hindi version at Delhi last year, has still to find a producer in Marathi. Even the other three plays, each one a fine piece, had poor runs on the stage. The poorest was that of the best of them, *Apoorva Bengal*, a moving play about the communal holocaust in East Bengal in 1946. This is sufficient proof of the demoralization of the Marathi stage.

M. G. Rangnekar, who mostly produces his own plays, has clung to the stage tenaciously for 12 years, but now seems to be on the decline. His plays, mostly light comedies, skim the surface of social problems. Atre, whose humour gave some life to the stage in the 30's, was a spent force before our time. On the amateur stage, the majority of new plays were adaptations or translations, mostly of Western plays. Shirwadkar, Kanekar, Manohar, Vakil and T. L. Deshpande were the more distinguished of the translators, their originals being Oscar Wilde, Maeterlinck, Capek, Barrie, Priestley and Chekov, to mention a few. Some of these translators have also written original plays.

All the three plays of Nana Jog were original, and their vigorous social content gives them a peculiar distinction. So does Mrs. Dikshit's *Jugar*, a play on the theme of marriage. The one-act play, which offers much scope for experiment, has been attempted by a few writers and with considerable success. Historical and mythological themes once dominated Marathi drama, partly on the strength of their innate appeal, and partly because they served as a convenient vehicle for contemporary political content. They are an exception now,

the rule being social themes. The present decline of the Marathi stage is emphasized by the fact that a large part of the writing on drama is taken up by the glorification, for the wrong reasons, of the orgy of music and the lavishness in setting and costume. Incidentally, on music there is a great deal of intelligent writing, though there is also some that merely tries to be "literary."

The rest of the story is briefly told. The personal essay, which flourished in the hands of Phadke, Khandekar and Kanekar in the 30's, was enervated by its obsession with its own form, and is almost defunct now. But, to compensate for it, as it were, a new type of essay, serious, even learned, in content but with a delightful personal accent, has been recently fashioned by two ladies, Shrimati Irawati Karve and Shrimati Durga Bhagwat. Another lady, Shrimati Kusumawati Deshpande, has written delicately evocative sketches. At this point the essay and the short story meet, and around it plays the work of writers like N. G. Gore, S. M. Mate and C. Y. Marathe, all these mostly seeking to escape from their urban environment into a rustic one. The true essay-quality is pervasive. Its aroma brings loveliness to a letter, or, to mention an outstanding example, to the travel-accounts of a writer like R. B. Joshi. Biography has fallen on evil days. Autobiography is even more luckless, for it is being ill-used for naive self-glorification by some literary celebrities. Some relief has been vouchsafed by the autobiography of a politician, Pundalikji Katgade.

Activity in literary criticism is considerable. Controversies have stimulated much interest in the essentials of literature and art. The most distinguished contribution to the theory of poetry came from Mardhekar, who recognizes an independent æsthetic emotion. Western literary theory, creatively imbibed, has enriched the interpretative writings of Kusumawati Deshpande, W. L. Kulkarni, S. K. Kshirsagar and others. Its Marxist leanings have endowed the work of a critic like D. K. Bedekar with energy and clarity. Sanskrit poetics still draw much loyalty; and scholars like R. S. Jog, D. K. Kelkar and G. T. Deshpande expound or restate the old canons assidu-

ously, and strain to reconcile them with modern theories. The *rasa* theory, for example, is sought to be canalized into psychology. The study of old literature is now being keenly related to the study of social history by eminent scholars like N. R. Phatak and G. B. Sardar; but the old school, holding up the saint-poets as isolated phenomena, in fact, far more as saints than as poets and hardly as human beings, is still active. Literary satire, since the brilliant verse-parodies by P. K. Atre towards the end of the 20's, has been a potent corrective force. P. L. Deshpande wielded it most trenchantly during the last few years. Unfortunately book-reviewing, as a whole, was poor in quality, most periodicals looking upon it as being no better than hack-work. Its *clichés* and puerilities and indiscriminate praise often confused and corrupted the simple reader.

It is thus a mixed story, of achievement and failure, of purposive groping and complacent convention. Where new paths have been struck out, hope has firm ground. Even elsewhere stagnation is relieved by some glimmer of promise. The promise is of realism, and of a finer integrity in the writer. If the common reader falls for trash, he alone is not to blame. He is so often helpless. The poses and artificialities of "literature" mock at him and shut him out. They aspire to amuse and impress "the cultured few." To rescue the reader from the quacks who drug him with pseudo-literature, literature has to awaken to his needs and speak of his hopes and fears, and speak of them in his own living language.

A RESUME OF ORIYA LITERATURE (1948-53)

SHRI KALINDI CHARAN PANIGRAHI

Any reviewer of Oriya literature may well be overwhelmed by the recent spate of new books, novels, short stories, essays, biographies, poems, plays, travelogues and translations which have appeared in recent years. The number of periodicals especially is growing by leaps and bounds. The language evolves new forms of expression and imagery, reflects numerous

currents and cross currents of contemporary thought and sensibility. So it is not exactly an easy task to draw up an exact report of the progress of our literature and pass any final literary judgments over the present period.

The heaps of literature produced in different branches of knowledge can hardly be compared with that of any other period in the past. But the quality of creative literature is definitely inferior to the quantity and very little of it can really claim to be placed with our classics. The writings, mostly ephemeral, often betray a dead waste of energy and wealth, and one wonders if the time involved in producing large quantities of this kind of up-to-date nonsense could not have been more profitably utilized.

Indeed the cheap thrillers, poems, plays and stories appealing to the baser instincts of man and woman, rousing in them unwholesome sensual desires and latent criminal tendencies, are increasing from strength to strength. The absolute liberty enjoyed by writers in publishing scandals about the State, the society and men of eminence is itself scandalous. Even those capable of displaying their creative imagination on a higher plane often fall victims to the present chaos, utterly disregarding the supreme standards of literature. These are obviously signs of a desire to escape from life and reality. If literature is a mirror of society, books turned out today bespeak a very degraded social condition and a corrupt public morality. The present degrading situation is apparently the outcome of the many social evils that cropped up in the wake of Independence.

The artificial Partition of India, leading to communal carnage and following the man-made famine in Bengal, and the severe shortages of food and clothes, salt and kerosene, stimulating the profit-seekers and black-marketeers to all sorts of infamous transactions, were responsible for the intellectual frustration and the moral bankruptcy mirrored in our literature. In addition, the invention of atomic weapons, aiming at an extensive and indiscriminate destruction of the human race, has disrupted the moral values of life to an extent unknown in history. The sense of insecurity was increased by

the problems of displaced refugees and the destruction of family life. It is these elements which account for the huge quantity of dubious literature produced in recent times.

Orissa, an eternally famished and underdeveloped land, participated in the general suffering though the political conditions were somewhat different there. While India, along with other states, lost her territory and became a prey to communal massacre, Orissa increased in size and population, owing to territorial extension brought about by the merger of feudatory areas. Communal strife was unknown and the people well versed in the art of contented living and able to boast of a great tradition in art, literature and other forms of culture in the past.

The defeat of the Crown is the theme of a poem written by Shri Godavarish Mahapatra on the fall of the ruling princes. It runs as follows:—

The feudal fortress of the stone age with its pomp and grandeur has been levelled with the lowly huts of the aboriginal Khonds.

Listen, O ye distressed, down-trodden, poor and pitiable traveller! The final burial of barbarism is now over.

Declare in the caves of mountains, in the shrines and in the pitch darkness that after long last the crown has been defeated by the loin-cloth!

A tone of robust optimism and an unshakable faith in the intrinsic ability of man to change the present world into a happier place are conspicuous in the poems of Shri Ananta Patnaik, a recent collection of which has appeared under the title *Flames of Peace*. He warns all those in power of their impending doom in his memorable poem, "O Great Astrologer!"

O Great Astrologer! you have missed and still are missing your target and stipulation for killing!

Comes hither a tide of laughter and your army of arms and ammunition are vanishing and shall vanish like a swarm of locusts.

The heraldry of your pearl palace is tottering,

Your demoniac world is quaking,

You are democrats of the rich business magnates and have brought pestilence.

Look at the flood of life in harvest;

Those who repeat the victory of death are withering and shall wither away!

Patnaik's style is racy and stimulating and he leads the progressive section of writers in Oriya. He concludes this song by invoking peace as the only solution for all the troubles and turmoil of the world, a peace made possible by a regime of which the hammer and sickle are the symbols.

The Valley of the Blue Moon is a collection of poems by Shri Binode Chandra Nayak who writes with a touch of romanticism, using words and expressions in a novel and interesting setting. The new form and technique of "prose-poems" is invariably followed by our modern poets, the general theme being the Common Man, his wants and anxieties, his sorrows and joys, his trials as the victim of an unjust social set-up. Shri Kunja Behari Das's poems, which vibrate with deep sympathy for the poor and the destitute, and the poems of Gyanindra Burma are forceful.

It is neither possible nor necessary to catalogue the numerous modern Oriya poets who are experimenting in different techniques, many of whom show promise of a glorious future. A periodical, exclusively devoted to progressive Oriya poetry, along with translations from other Indian and foreign languages, is now being published at Calcutta, edited by Durga Charan Parida and Krushna Charan Behera. The best-known among those who contribute to this journal are Chintamani Behera, Jadunath Das Mahapatra, Janaki Mahanti, and Binode Rautra. A prolific writer of poetry, Gopal Chandra Misra covers a variety of subjects while Jayakrushna Misra follows the classical vein.

The years we are surveying have seen a large harvest of novels and short stories, though the output has been for the most part mediocre in quality. The untold sufferings of the people due to dire shortage of food and clothes during the man-made famine of 1943 have been portrayed in a collection of short stories by Udayanath Sarangi, the first edition of which was sold out in two months. Several short stories by Rajkishore Rai, Surendra Mahanti, Laxminarayan Mahanti, Chakradhar Samal and others, dealing with the

Partition of India, the communal carnage and the havoc wrought by black-marketeers, have appeared. Surendra Mahanti's one-act play *Senapati*, the life-story of the late Fakir Mohan Senapati, the celebrated Oriya novelist and poet, was a remarkable production. This play has since been published in a recent issue of *Jhankara*, the well-known Oriya monthly edited by Harekrushna Mahtab.

Apart from cheap thrillers and crime stories, readable novels on serious topics dealing with socio-political and psychological aspects of the present age have also been published. *Sharvari* (The Enveloping Night) by Kanhu Charan is an ambitious attempt to write the history of mankind from the earliest times. Gopinath's *Rahura Chhaya* (The Shadow of an Eclipse) has not been as well received as his previous works. A number of new novelists are making brilliant contributions to Oriya fiction. On the whole, however, most of our novels are but enlarged short stories overburdened more with words than with sense or artistry.

Drama has made rapid strides in recent times with two permanent theatres at Cuttack and a Repertory Theatre in the districts. Stage technique and acting too have improved considerably and helped to popularize the drama. Ramchandra Misra outshines many of his contemporaries as a popular playwright. His *Ghara Samsara* (Home and the World) brought him immediate fame. His scenes are laid primarily against a rural background while the main characters are drawn from middle-class agriculturists whom he treats with sympathy and emotion. The play deals with a family feud and ends happily as a result of the sacrifices made by the hero of the drama. Misra has produced a succession of plays and gained new triumphs. His *Bhai-Bhauja* (Brother and Sister-in-law) ran on the Cuttack stage for a hundred nights.

Next in popularity come Gopal Chandra Chhotrai, Adwait Charan Mahanti, Monoranjan Das and Bhanja Kishore Patnaik whose knowledge of dramatic art, sharpness of characterization and caustic wit are responsible for their success on the stage. Kali Charan Patnaik, our veteran dramatist, has

written another play round the life of Adi Kavi Sarala Das, the author of the Oriya *Mahabharat*. Song and music continue to occupy an important part in dramatic performances and it is almost inconceivable to stage a play without them.

The playwright and the actor are now able to add to their income by broadcasting and acting for the films. Films in Oriya are now on the increase and a radio station has been installed at Cuttack and has been functioning for the last seven years. Writers are availing themselves of these good opportunities and the radio station encourages literary productions by broadcasting stories, poems, playlets, book reviews and essays from time to time.

Very little encouragement for the fostering of creative talent is being offered by publishers. The reason given for such an attitude is the paucity of demand and the indifference of the public towards any thought-provoking work, in spite of the fact that hundreds of new schools and colleges have been opened in the State. Established authors are therefore driven to write textbooks, juvenile literature or radio scripts. The increasing number of periodicals has not improved the position as editors are not inclined to pay for the articles they publish. The Oriya writer therefore has to struggle against tremendous odds.

A writer who has made remarkable contributions to every branch of literature is Pandit Nilakantha Das, whose study of Orissan culture and the evolution of Oriya literature, *Oriya Bhasara Krama Parinati*, published in two big volumes, is a masterly exposition of the subject. He has been followed by a band of able writers of critical essays, including Suryanarayan Das, Gouri Kumar Brahma and Bansidhar Mahanty, who have shown considerable promise in this field.

Biographies and translations have also appeared during this period. Apart from the biographies of the great leaders of India, lives of local notabilities such as Madhusudan Das and Pandit Gopabandhu Das have been written by Nabakishore Das and Lingaraj Misra respectively.

Of the several renderings into Oriya of different Indian

and foreign languages the recent translations by Prabhas Chandra Satpathi of world classics have attracted attention. Gopal Chandra Kanugo, the well-known artist of Orissa, has rendered into Oriya verse the immortal stanzas of Omar Khayyam and the book is awaiting publication with the author's own illustrations.

Probably it is still too early to expect our authors to be more conscious of their responsibility to their country and her people and to devote themselves to her welfare. Neither the attainment of Independence and its aftermath nor the labour spent on the constructions of dams, roads and bridges nor the working of the Five-Year Plan have yet been mirrored in fiction, drama or poetry. The time is not ripe for literature to break its silence over these human victories. There are clear indications, however, of a fast approaching new social order and a new type of human being following in the wake of our hard-earned Independence. The chaos and indecision are passing away and the writer is recovering from his stupor with dreams of the radiant future that is before us.

PANJABI LITERATURE (1948-53)

SHRIMATI AMRITA PRITAM

In 1849 when the Panjabi Generals finally surrendered their arms to the British near Mankiala, the whole of the Panjab had come under the British yoke. For some time the spark remained alive in the hearts of the people, the desire to free Panjab from the foreign yoke, but after the Mutiny of 1857, a deathblow was given to the people's desire to see their land free and the terror of British rule spread in all directions. In order to divert the attention of the masses from the political scene, the British encouraged educational and cultural progress. In the whole country a movement of Revivalism started, from which sprang much romantic and idealistic literature. The most distinguished literary figure of that period is Bhai Vir Singh, whose poetry is full of the

Creator's mystic beauty and in whose prose there is a presentation of an ideal way of life based on the tenets of the Sikh religion.

When the literature of this feudalistic society suffered its first setback, the kings, princes and the religious heads ceased to play the parts of heroes on the literary stage and the middle classes took their place. Social feelings gathered momentum and the attitude of the writers continued to undergo a change. Thus the themes of Dhani Ram Chatrik's poems, the characters of Nanak Singh's novels and the scenes of Ishwar Chander Nanda's plays all relate to the problems of our everyday life.

The social and political awakening had not reached its zenith, yet the fairy tales of the Panjab were being replaced by stories of the beauty and charm of our land. S. Gur Baksh Singh's writings deeply impressed the people. This writer not only fathomed the depths of the human heart to portray the deep urges of love and romance but also elevated Panjabi prose to an enviable pedestal.

During World War II, the writers, caught in the conflict between hope and frustration, sometimes turned to mysticism, sometimes embraced idealism and sometimes fraternized even with realism. There was a deep resentment in their minds. There being no freedom of expression, much use was made of irony. A sense of reserve and restraint also manifested itself, but the shadows of frustration were deep and the writers generally found one escape or another.

At that time, while Pritam Singh Safeer embraced the mystic, didactic but pessimistic trend, Mohan Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal and Sant Singh Sekhon gave us the psychological analysis of the then existing social and intellectual problems. In the short stories of Sujan Singh and the plays of Harcharan Singh, the characters were generally from the middle classes and the subject was, more often than not, the prevalent social evils. In the poems of Devinder Satyarthi, the heroine would become an embodiment of simplicity and possess plain features, or perhaps some half-starving peasant would be

found in conversation with the grains of corn.

In idealistic literature only "beauty" used to be the underlying theme, but this tendency underwent a change, and, in their first experiments in realism, some poets and writers depicted base, scurrilous and sensual objects in considerable detail. But in their next experiments they freed their writing of this tendency, and set out in search of the social background of existing problems. In this process literature came nearer to life at every step. We can call this "Realism" or "Social Realism."

During the Partition of our country in 1947, Panjabi literature seemed to undergo a sudden and huge convulsion. In the face of physical and mental torture and tyranny, the values of romance, morality and society decayed. That historic year, 1947, not only brought about a change in the political map, but also placed an indelible mark on the whole of Indian literature. During the Partition the Panjab was the greatest sufferer and naturally enough the effect on Panjabi literature has been the most profound. The most notable feature of this upheaval is that Panjabi writers did not allow the virus of parochialism, hatred or even pessimism to taint their writing. On the other hand, their faith in the victory of spiritual values over the diabolical nature of man is clearly manifest in their writings. Both in Panjabi prose and Panjabi poetry, poignant descriptions are given of the tragic and heart-rending events of the Partition. Not only the subject-matter but also the purely æsthetic aspect of the poetry of these days has a lasting and impressive quality not seen earlier.

The biggest contribution towards the art of short-story-writing during this period came from Kartar Singh Duggal, descriptive of much pain and horror and replete with a sensitive analysis of the human mind. Kartar Singh Duggal, Nanak Singh, Amrita Pritam and Surinder Singh Narula have written a novel each on the Partition of the Panjab. Round this subject, Mohinder Singh Sarma and Navtej Singh have written some short stories, and Amrita Pritam and Mohan

Singh some stirring poems. Apart from these, sporadic and occasional descriptions of the tragedy have come from various pens.

Duggal, while vividly presenting the mental state of his characters, steeps himself in their deepest emotions, to make them appear most natural, and the result strikes deep into the reader's consciousness. The most valuable quality of Duggal's pen is his ability to keep a hold on the reader's attention. This versatile writer has, during the period under review, contributed three plays, two novels and three collections of short stories to our literature.

Amongst earlier authors, the playwright Balwant Gargi, the poet Piara Singh Sahrai and the short-story-writer Mohinder Singh Sarma have come into the limelight during these years. Among the playwrights, Balwant Gargi is the favourite of the masses. His success is due not so much to the themes of his plays as to the crisp, lucid and natural dialogue of his characters.

Piara Singh Sahrai's poetry, written in the last five or six years, has taken him a long way to success. Apart from the vision displayed in his poetry, the form also has much improved. And Mohinder Singh Sarma, who in his previous short stories used to give his prose a deep poetic tinge and undercurrents of strong emotion, is now producing work monumental both in form and substance. In his new creations, the understanding of human psychology is also well marked. Although Devinder Satyarthi has been writing mainly in Hindi, yet during these years he has contributed two collections of short stories and two of poems to his mother tongue.

Surinder Singh Narula had previously written a novel and a few short poems, but in these years has produced four novels, quite a few short stories and many articles on literary criticism. Like Nanak Singh, Narula has made a place for himself as a novelist. This artist, true to his role of a conscientious and progressive writer, does not make his characters unbelievably perfect but has given them a realistic touch. There are two weaknesses in Narula's novels which are re-

sponsible for his lack of popularity among the masses. The first is the lack of a well-constructed plot and the second a lack of the warmth of emotion in his characters. It is hoped he will make up for these in his future work. Narinder Pal Singh has written three novels in these years. Sant Singh Sekhon's *Lahoo Mitti* is also the product of the same period, during which the veteran novelist Nanak Singh has had six novels to his credit.

Many new authors have appeared on the literary horizon during this period, on whom high hopes may be placed. Navtej Singh, Kulwant Singh Virk and Hari Singh Dilbar, short-story-writers; Jaswant Singh Kanwal, a novelist; and Santokh Singh Dhir, a poet, have emerged as new stars in the firmament. In August 1953, at the World Youth Festival in Bucharest, the capital of Rumania, one of Navtej Singh's short stories won the first prize. Gur Baksh Singh and Mohan Singh, who were the leading literary figures of the pre-1947 period, have not receded from the position they have occupied so far. While previously Gur Baksh Singh's pen was famous for its magic ability to reproduce his experience of love and the æsthetic pursuit of beauty, it has now succeeded in picturing aspects of class struggle and its harrowing repercussions. Mohan Singh's poetry, which used to be on the lips of the people because of its lyrical quality and simple cadence, has not lost its rhythm while portraying the anguish and the sufferings of the masses. Love is the main theme of Gur Baksh Singh's short stories and the substance of Mohan Singh's poetry, and stirs both these writers to a realistic portrayal of the working man's attitude to love and of the philosophy of his class.

Gur Baksh Singh, who in earlier years portrayed the pangs of unsuccessful love and presented the age-old stories of Laila Majnu, Chandi Dass and Rami in a style remarkable for its grandeur, can now portray "the mass consciousness," the people's awakening and the characters in the struggle between old and new China with equal success.

Mohan Singh, under the influence of Persian poetry, called love "the moth, intoxication, fragrance, a spark, an

ember, illusion, the ocean and a cup of poison." For lover he gave the similes "soul," "bargainer," "light" and "a cup of wine." He called life "a drop of water," "a bowl" and a "sketch." Hair he described as "smoke," "night," a "serpent," a "crow," a "swan" and a "jungle." The eyes he described as "two streams," "glow-worms," "nests," "birds" and bowls of honey and wind." But in his recent writings he calls the landlord "a leech" on the skin of a labourer; describing the neck of a labourer he sets aside the simile of the Persian *surahis* (jugs) and compares it with a wheat stalk shorn of all the grain—the ripe as well as the unripe.

Writing does not become "progressive" only by the use of symbols. Any lasting work is invariably the crest of a high wave of life rising from within, which, swamping the soul and overflowing its banks, flings ashore pearls from the depths of the turbulent ocean. In the present phase of realism, some works are also coming into being which are doomed to be short-lived. The poets of today do not pay much heed to the form in which they work—the inevitable result of this stage of experimentation. One feels that the writer of today has a deeper understanding of the purpose and significance of his art. An intelligent writer naturally does not flaunt his objectives; he absorbs them within himself, and sends them out as a fragrance which permeates the breeze all around.

An interesting contribution to Panjabi literature has been made by Principal Teja Singh, a veteran critic and prose writer who has originated the writing of "standard" Panjabi, extricating it from the morass of various dialects. He has also pioneered in the art of literary criticism and has produced four books on the subject.

Professor Pritam Singh and Professor Sant Singh Sekhon have also proved their ability as literary critics. Also in this group are Professor Harbans Singh, Gurcharan Singh, Balbir Singh, Parminder Singh, Kirpal Singh, Kasel and Surinder Singh Narula. Their appraisal of the various aspects of literature is noteworthy. Gurcharan Singh's *Our Playwright* and Mohan Singh and His Poetry, Balbir Singh's *Our Short-story-*

writers, Parminder Singh and Kasel's *Facets of Literature* and *The Birth and Evolution of Panjabi Literature*, and Surinder Singh Narula's *Our Novelists* and *The History of Panjabi Literature* have all been published during the period under review.

Dr. Mohan Singh and Dr. Gopal Singh are our veteran scholars. Two ardent and devout research scholars, Piara Singh Padam and Shamsher Singh Ashok, have come into the field. They have made invaluable research into our ancient literature. Piara Singh Padam's *History of the Panjabi Language* and the *History of Gurumukhi Script* give detailed information about these subjects.

Big strides have been made by Panjabi literature in these years. One thing which has always kept the people of Panjab close to their literature is the bond which exists between the literary language and the language of the people in everyday life. This bond has helped to link our writers to the soil so closely that even when the Panjab was divided into two parts, it remained one in the matter of literary progress. The same folk songs are sung on both sides of the border. The literary heritage of both is common. In the initial stages of literature, the contribution of Muslim writers is even greater than that of the Hindus and Sikhs. Today the Muslim poet Syed Waras Shah is as popular in East Panjab as in West. In these years since the Partition, the Muslim writers of West Panjab, in order to keep alive old traditions, have started a monthly called *Panjabi*. Joshua Fazl Din, Feroz Din Sharaf, Rafi Pir, Sajjad Haider, Dr. Faqir Mohamed, Abdul Majid Bhati, Sharif Kunjahi, Abdul Majid Saliq and Ahmed Rahi are renowned writers of West Panjab. Sajjad Haider, with his Panjabi short stories and radio plays, Ahmed Rahi with his book of poems entitled *Trinjan* and Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabasam with his translation of Dr. Iqbal's Urdu poetry into Panjabi, are keeping the flag flying in Pakistan and proclaiming the essential unity of Panjabi literature.

THE PROGRESS OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE (1948-53)

DR. C. S. VENKATESWARAN

The period under review has produced many original works in Sanskrit and a large number of critical dissertations and editions of valuable works on the different branches of Sanskrit literature.

In the attempt to review the progress of Sanskrit literature, emphasis is laid on original works of different forms and content. Since we have to deal only with the works published, the works noted below would represent only a fraction of the total output of original writings in Sanskrit. There remains still a wealth of poetic and dramatic literature in manuscript form awaiting publication.¹ The number of original works published in Sanskrit is by no means discouraging when we realize the fact that Sanskrit writers labour under many handicaps. The incentive for creative literary productions in Sanskrit is lacking. The absence of an adequate number of discerning and sympathetic readers, the preference of the majority of present-day Sanskrit scholars for books

¹ By Dr. V. Raghavan. *Sri Dikshitendra Charitam*, a *mahakavya* on the life and achievements of the great Carnatic musician Muthuswami Dikshitan.

Wimuktihi, a philosophical one-act play.

Pratap-rudriya-yasho-widambanam, a dramatic parody of decadent Sanskrit poetry.

By Dr. Bahadur C. Chhabra. *Ishopalambhaha*, a *Ninda-stuti* on Siva.

Suvarna-binduhu, an anthology of small lyrical pieces by Shri Y. Mahalinga Sastri. *Kali-pradurbhava-natakam*, a play in seven acts. *Adi-kavyodayam*, a *prahasana* in 10 acts. *Udgatru-dashananam*, a drama in seven acts. *Ubhaya-rupakam*, a comedy. *Shringar-Nardiyam*, a musical comedy. *Kali-pradurbhava*, a story in prose by Shri K. S. Nagarajan. *Unmatta-Keechakam*, a drama. *Lavali-Parinayam*, a poem in 10 cantos. *Bharatiya-Deshbhakta-Charitam*, part two, biographical sketches in prose, by Shri M. Ramkrishna Bhat. *Shri Shivanand Vilasaha*, a poem in eight cantos. *Markandeya-vijayam*, a drama by Shri E. S. Sundaram Iyer.

on Sanskrit written in languages easier than Sanskrit, and the orthodox scholar's difficulty in reconciling himself to modern secular ideas being expressed in the sacred language are only a few of the handicaps. The ordinary Sanskrit reader has still to appreciate the truth underlying Kalidasa's warning that poetry is not good merely because it is old or bad because it is new: "*Puranam ityeva na sadhu sarvam na capi kavyam navamityavadyam.*"

No literary effort can thrive without the active sympathy, co-operation and patronage of an enlightened public. In fact there is no dearth of literary talent in Sanskrit. Only, the writers deserve better recognition and encouragement. A number of leading monthly and weekly journals² are giving a fillip to such talent by taking upon themselves the laudable task of publishing poems, plays, essays and short stories in Sanskrit. Our Universities also reserve a section of their journals for the publication of articles in Sanskrit. But for these different sources of inspiration, much of the literary talent in Sanskrit would have remained latent or suppressed. The institution of a Poet Laureateship for Sanskrit in the Madras State has been a real incentive to Sanskrit scholars for making fresh creative efforts in poetry and its continuance will have a salutary effect on Sanskrit writers. Further, some

² *Monthlies, Weeklies and other Journals in Sanskrit.*

Suprabhatam, *Sanskrita-ratnakarah* and *Sanskrita Sahitya Sammelanam*—Banaras.

Sanskrit Sahitya Parishad, *Sanskrita Sushama* and *Manjusha*—Calcutta.

Sanskrita Bhavitavyam—Nagpur.

Sanskrita Jivini—Patna.

Amrita Vani—Bangalore.

Udyana Patrika—Tanjore.

Bharati—Jaipur.

Nrisimhapriya—Kanchipuram.

Sanskrita Pracarakam—Delhi.

Sanskrita Saketah and *Sanskritam*—Ayodhya.

Vaijayanti—Bagalkot.

Manorama—Orissa.

Brahmavidya—Madras.

Sanskrita Candrika, *Sunrta Vadin*, etc.

Parishads and other bodies,³ by instituting awards for original Sanskrit works, have helped to draw out the literary talent.

Compared to the volume of original works in Sanskrit, contributions on Sanskrit literature in different parts of India are voluminous.⁴ The number of learned articles on different aspects of Sanskrit literature contributed by scholars to the biennial sessions of the All-India Oriental Conference held since 1947 at Darbhanga, Bombay, Lucknow and Ahmedabad would easily exceed a hundred. A survey of the output on Sanskrit literature, including research articles and critical editions of standard works on the different branches of Sanskrit literature, falls strictly within the purview of the

³ Sanskrita Sahitya Parishad—Trichinopoly.
Sanskrita Academy—Madras.
Devanaju Bahadur Trust—Mysore.

⁴ *Research Institutes and their publications.*
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

The Gujarat Research Society—*Journal*.
Royal Asiatic Society—*Journal*.
New Indian Antiquary.

The Kuppuswami Susha Research Institute, Madras.

The Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras—*Bulletin*.

Oriental Research, Madras—*Journal*.

The Adyar Library, Madras—*Bulletin*.

The Oriental Manuscript Library, Trivandrum.

Sri Rama Varma Research Institute, Trichur—*Bulletin*.

The Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tanjore—*Journal*.

The Venkateswara Oriental Research Institute, Tirupati—*Bulletin*.

The Institute of Indian Culture, Bangalore.

Mythri Society, Bangalore—*Quarterly Journal*.

Vaidika Samsodhana Mandal, Poona.

Deccan College Research Institute, Poona—*Bulletin*.

Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona—*Annual*.
Orientalist, Poona.

Oriental Research Institute, Baroda—*Journal*.

Svadhya Mandal, Aundh.

International Academy of Sanskrit Culture, Nagpur.

Visvesvarananda Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur.

Ganganath Jha Research Institute, Allahabad.

Bihar Research Society, Patna—*Journal*.

Indian Culture Research Institute, Calcutta.

Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, Calcutta.

The Mithila Research Institute, Darbhanga.

Sanskrit section of the All-India Oriental Conference. Hence, in this Conference of the P.E.N. Club we confine ourselves to a survey of the original works in Sanskrit that have appeared since the last session of the P.E.N. Club held at Banaras in 1947.

The creative genius in Sanskrit has always shown a predilection for the poetic form even where the prose form could be adopted, a tendency that persists even at the present day. Of these poems some are longer ones, of the *mahakavya* type; others are shorter lyrics of different types, descriptive, devotional, biographical, didactic and philosophical. There are also some anthologies embodying one or more of these lyrical types. Again, there are plays of the *nataka* type and the shorter one-act plays. The essays, which are mainly in prose, are of a varied nature, critical, descriptive or biographical. Short stories and novels depicting diverse aspects of life and society deserve to be better represented in Sanskrit literature.

In the longer poems of the *mahakavya* type, colourful descriptions are woven round a central theme. Pandita Kshama Row is one of the few women poets in Sanskrit. Hailing from an illustrious family of Sanskrit scholars, she has to her credit two *mahakavyas* of the classical type. *Tukarama Caritam* in nine cantos describes the life and teachings of the poet-saint of Maharashtra, in sweet and lucid Sanskrit. *Sri Ramadasa Caritam* in 13 cantos is characterized by a similar theme and diction. MM. K. S. Krishna Murthi Sastri, in his *Saticaritam* of 11 cantos couched in chaste and dignified language, deals with the stirring theme of Savitri's triumphant devotion to her lord, Satyavan. The poetic talents of Shri K. S. Nagarajan transformed the meagre story in the *Bala-kanda* of Valmiki into the *Sita-Svayamvaram* of 16 cantos teeming with original descriptions. His *Sabari-Vilasam* in six cantos has taken its story from the *Siva-Rahasya-Khanda* of *Skanda Purana* and yet reflects some of the salient features of the modern age. Shri T. S. Sundaresa Sarma, who earned the title of Mahakavi by his earlier poem *Tyagaraja Caritam*, and an absorbing play entitled *Prema-Vijayam*, depicts in the *Nalini-Caritam* in six cantos the sublime love

of a *gopi* for Lord Krishna in his characteristic simple style. Shri S. N. Tadpatrikar has dealt with the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi in his *Gandhi Gita* in 24 chapters. Closely modelled upon the *Bhagavad-Gita*, each chapter in the work is supposed to represent each letter of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Aryodaya Kavyam* by Ganga Prasada Upadhyaya in 19 cantos deals with the history of India from early times.

The lyric is the most popular form among the shorter poems. It is to be found in different forms, descriptive, devotional, biographical, didactic and philosophical. B. C. Chhabra in his *Nyaktara-Jana-pada-Sobha* gives his poetic pen-pictures of the scenic beauty of the Netherlands. The historic city of Persepolis is the theme of a short poem by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja. Shri K. V. Krishna Murti Sarma graphically represents the manifest defects of the Kali age in the *Kalivijimbhanam* in about 100 verses. That gifted votary of the Sanskrit Muse, Shri Y. Mahalinga Sastri, describes a river in his *Nadi-Purah*. His *Bhramara Sandesa* is the latest addition to the unending stream of *Sandesa-Kavya* literature deriving inspiration from Kalidasa's *Megha Sandesa*. The author's *Vanelata* deals with an elegant love theme. The *Rig-Veda-Suktani* is a rendering in classical Sanskrit of some of the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, while the *Uttara-Khanda-Yatra* by Shri Sivaprasada Bhattacharya gives a description of some places of pilgrimage in Northern India. *Jayapura-Vaibhavam* is a description of Jaipur by the editor of *Bharati*.

The devotional lyric in Sanskrit easily outnumbers the other types. This is quite natural because of its being a spontaneous effusion of the devotee's sublimated emotion which seeks no other reward except its own expression.

MM. K. S. Krishna Murti Sastri's *Stava-Ratna-Trayam* written in a pleasing metre is dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi and Sarasvati and to Lord Srinivasa in a style reminiscent of Sri Sankara's sublime Muse. The royal poet Shri Rama Varma Pariksit Tamparan of Cochin has dedicated his *Purna-Trayisas-Stava* to the local family deity. The grace of the Mother Goddess has inspired Shri Kerala Varma to

compose the *Mukambika-Stava* in chaste and dignified language. In a short poem entitled *Ramaprasada-Stava*, Shri T. S. Sundaresa Sarma praises his favourite deity. Among the works of Shri M. Ramakrishna Bhat may be mentioned the *Somanatha-Samjya-Stava*, the *Arunachala-Stotra* and the *Guru-Saparya* on Swami Sivananda. Shri K. S. Nagarajan has composed the *Visalakshi-Stava* and another lyric describing the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. Shri Malladi Daksinamurti Sastri's *Daksina Murti Stuti* is a devotional lyric in 70 verses. Shri Y. Mahalinga Sastri pays homage to Swami Sivananda in his *Sivananda-Panca-Dasi-Stotra*. Shri P. Ramadas has laid his *Guru-Carana-Kusumanjali* at the feet of his Acharya at Sringeri and dedicated the *Artiharana-Nrisimha Stotra* to his favourite deity. *Goda-Suktam* and *Goda-Vrata-Divya-Prabandham* are pleasing renderings in Sanskrit of the Tamil songs of Andal by P. B. Annagarachariar, the learned editor of the Journal *Nrisimha-Priya*. *Ganga-Lahari* is a century of verses by Shri K. V. Appa Rao of Kovur. Shri Lalita Dasa has addressed a collection of devotional hymns to the Mother Goddess in his *Sisu-Jalpana-Sahasri*. *Bharata-Bhajanam* is a collection of songs dedicated to the Motherland and to Mahatmaji by Mayuram Visvanatha Sastri. Shri S. T. G. Varadachari, the well-known author of *Susupti-Vrittam*, has paid tribute to Valmiki's genius in *Na Cct Valmikirabhavisyat*.

The *Aparoksamrta-Satakam* by Shri K. L. V. Sastri deals with the philosophy of man's liberation. *Isvara-Svarupam* is a similar poem by Shri Manisankar Vasant Rao Upadhyaya of Baroda. M. Ramakrishna Aryah's *Sarada-Prasada* and Shri T. S. Sundaresa Sarma's *Arya-Panchasat* are didactic in their import. Shri Y. Mahalinga Sastri's *Dravida-Arya-Subhasita-Saptati* is a collection of 70 epigrammatic sayings rendered from the original Tamil into Sanskrit. The author's *Dimbha-Sambodhanam* is a collection of verses addressed to a child. The *Vyajokti-Ratnavali* is also didactic in tone.

Among the poems dealing with outstanding personalities is Dr. V. Raghavan's life of Mahatma Gandhi, a theme also dealt with by MM. K. S. Krishna Murti Sastri in his *Mahatma Campu*, also called *Ascaryadarsah*. The subject receives further

elaboration in the Kalidasan style at the hands of Shri K. L. V. Sastri in *Mahatma-Vijaya*. This author has written the *Raghavendra-Caritamritam* dealing with the life of Saint Raghavendra, while Shri H. P. Narayana Sastri depicts the life of a scholar-statesman of Vijaynagar in *Vidyaranya-Vijayam*. The life of Shri Kaivalya Yogeswar Sivananda, who migrated from Kashmir and settled in South Canara, is poetically narrated by a scion of the family, Dr. V. M. Kaikini, in his *Siva-Kaivalya-Caritam*. Shri P. S. Subbarama Bhatta's *Sahitya Taravali* deals with 28 luminaries in the firmament of *Alamkara* literature, commencing with Valmiki and ending with Jagannatha Pandita. Dr. C. Kunhan Raja's *Bharata-Rashtra-Sanghatanam* is a poetic rendering in Sanskrit of the Indian Constitution. Dr. Raghavan's *Mahipo-Manu-Niti-Colah* revolves round the fearless love for justice evinced by an ancient king of Tamilnad. His *Deva-Nandi-varada-Rajah* describes the triumphant devotional fervour of a minstrel in Ranganatha's shrine at Srirangam. The *Svarajya-Ketuh* celebrates the first anniversary of Indian Independence. Shri M. R. Bhat's *Svatantrya Jyotih* is a short ballad about the Indian Republic while Shri T. V. Kapali Sastri's *Bharati-Stavah* also has a patriotic theme. Tributes to King Ramavarma of Cochin are contained in *Mala* by Shri A. V. Krishna Warier and Dr. C. Kunhan Raja. The *Bharati-Gitam* by V. R. Lakshmi Ammal sings of the social and political resurgence of India. *Bhasa-kavya-Vivertih* is a rendering into Sanskrit of some famous Malayalam poems by Shri E. V. Raman Nambudiri. The poems published in the *Samskritam* of Ayodhya include *Adarsa-Raghava* by Somanatha Sarma of Nepal, the *Dhara-Yasodharah*, a historical poem by Shri D. M. Kulkarni of Satara, a short poem *Devaki-Devana* by Shri Prabhudatta Swamin of Meerut, *Hitopadistam* by Shri Sitaram Arya of Bihar, *Sri Vishnu Caritamritam* and *Sri-Rama-Vivaha* by Swami Lakshmana Sastri of Rajasthan.

The *Padya-Pushpanjali* by V. Subramanya Iyer is a collection of short poems dealing with a wide variety of topics, some of them being original and others being translations from standard English writers. The author brings to bear on his work a refreshing modernity of outlook coupled with the

idealistic Indian attitude to life. The *Prakriti-Vilasam* of MM. K. S. Krishna Murti Sastri is an exquisite collection of eight nature poems in Sanskrit, each consisting of 61 verses and describing the grandeur of the ocean, the forest, the mountain, the wind, the Ganges, the sun, the moon and the night.

The output in dramatic literature has not been so prolific as that in other fields of Sanskrit literature, for, as the author of the *Mudra-Raksasa* remarks, "Writing a successful drama is as difficult as the efficient running of a state." There is also little demand for fresh dramatic pieces from the public.

The *Uma-Parinayam* in 10 acts by Shri E. S. Sundaram Iyer is a dramatic representation of Parvati's marriage as depicted in *Kumara-Sambhava*. The story of Nala and Damayanti has been dramatized by Kalipada-Tarkacharya in *Nala-Damayantiyam*. *Prasanna-Kasyapam* by Shri Jaggu Alwar Iyengar is a drama which deals with the later portion of Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam*. *Yathabhimatam* is a Sanskrit rendering of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

Essays written in prose are critical, descriptive, biographical and historical. The *Sandesa-dvaya-Sarasvadini* is a comparative study of the *Mcgha* and *Hamsa Sandesas* by Shri A. V. Gopalachariar. Shri M. Ramakrishna Bhat's *Visvajanani-Gita* seeks to set forth the catholicity of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. His *Upanishan-Mahima* deals with the greatness of the Upanishads. Shri P. S. Subharama Bhatta's *Sanskrita-Adhyananasya Prayojanam* is an essay on the study of Sanskrit. The *Galpa-Kusumanjali* is a collection of essays published by the Samskrita Karyalaya of Ayodhya. Shri K. S. Nagaraja's *Bharatiya-Desabhakta-Caritam* contains biographical sketches of five Indian patriots. *Sahita-Vimarsa* is an original treatise on literary criticism by Appalla Someswara Sarma. *Cid-Vilasa* is a philosophical work by Ramajha Pandeya, being a translation of the Hindi original written by Dr. Sampurnanand. Shri H. R. Agarwal's *Sanskrita-Sahita-Itihasah* in two parts deals in simple Sanskrit with some famous poets and their works.

The short story is becoming popular in Sanskrit. Pandita Kshama Row's "*Yatha-Nyayam*," S. Srinivasa Sarma's "*Sunah-sepa*" and the "*Niskriti*" published in the *Manjusha* belong to this type.

The novel as a distinct form of literary art has yet to come into its own. The absence of an adequate number of readers who can understand and appreciate Sanskrit is responsible for the dearth of works in this field. A gesture of positive sympathy and encouragement from the public and the State is bound to inspire the writers to fresh creative efforts. Periodical conferences of Sanskrit poets and writers should be arranged and the writers publicly honoured. The so-called utilitarian attitude that questions the very necessity of expressing current ideas through the medium of Sanskrit has to be satisfactorily tackled. The necessity for writing fresh works in Sanskrit should be felt, recognized and realized. Learned bodies should institute prizes to discover the talents of aspiring poets. Above all the language should be considerably simplified and made more popular. In that direction only can one see any hope for any real literary activity in Sanskrit.

MODERN TAMIL LITERATURE (1948-53)

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

To attempt any kind of survey of Tamil writing during a very limited period such as the one assigned to me is fraught with many difficulties. In the first place one is so close to it that one is denied the proper perspective for correct appraisal. Secondly, the space allotted here cannot make any real provision for a complete survey of what has been produced, much less for a critical study of it. One other handicap deserving of mention at the outset, though not so material, is the impossibility of drawing a clear line between imaginative and other types of literature in a survey like this. If at all, one can only show which writers are established, which way the

trends in literary writing are pointing and what harvest of impressions can be gathered from these.

During the last decade and more, Tamilnad has been passing through a political change, which may for the sake of conciseness be called that towards "the democratic idea." Peoples' minds are practically possessed by it. Its implications are not merely political but also social and economic. The age-old moral acquiescences in certain standards of conduct in society are much shaken with the new spirit, and, worse still, with the growing madness for linguistic areas. Because of the universal franchise conferred by the Constitution and the fall of social barriers, respect for the upper classes has become almost extinct. And with the steady rise of a feeling that superiority in any manner or shape can no longer hold good, here is a startling self-complacency born of too great a tendency to ignore spiritual values.

It is true that the struggle for the freedom of India has had its marked influence on the progress of the regional languages. At the dawn of our Independence, with which the period under survey here begins, the tempo of self-expression everywhere showed visible quickening. At any rate the Tamil press, by expanding in all directions, has begun to make itself felt. But these again are only signs of the times; they are the consequences of a general tendency which has been long gathering strength or maturing. Half-anna dailies and one-anna weeklies have made the reading of the news and views more openly a matter of every village *pial*, a daily luxury, more and more openly spreading communal hatreds, as competition forces them towards greater licence. And these journals, however cheap and unattractive, carrying news for the curiosity-ridden, are sufficiently provocative to make them indulge in sharp argument, and lose their tempers, and make *bazaar* crowds and vegetable-vendors fulminate against Ministers and against one policy or another. Although the literacy of the people in this country is utterly negligible, certainly propaganda by political adventurers has increased a virulent type of communal consciousness in men and women of even out-of-the-way villages. Some of the papers are power-

ful not so much in initiating ideas and healthy movements as in disseminating infection far and wide and in inducing in half-baked minds a state of fever and frenzy.

Added to all these, some of the present-day ideologies give an impetus to the undisciplined elements amidst us. Apart from Communist thought trying to inject, through the clandestine press, foreign modes of social and economic adjustments, "progressive writers," as some among us choose to describe themselves, sow the seeds of doubt among the indiscriminate, preach that what we have so far dubbed "literature" is no longer good enough for our consumption. Rather they try to persuade us to imagine that they are more serious in writing or producing literature than those who were keeping old men from their corners by telling them mere tales. They want the novel and the play to be taken more earnestly as instruments for the making of a better world by means of frank criticism of the existing order of things. In short, they believe in and also try to propagate the idea that art has to be more true to life than love stories. According to them, the problems of the day, such as the condition of workers and the imminent need of a satisfactory method of distribution of employment and the good things of life, call for an urgent solution from artists blessed with real, prophetic vision. Modernity, according to them, is absolutely necessary in everything. They regard youth as an exclusively modern conception, forgetting that the cry for modernity is as old as history and "the revolt of youth" as early a slogan as the days of Adam and Eve.

One thing of course is certain. Whatever changes in the external aspect of things may have come about, human nature at bottom has remained recognizably the same; otherwise the great classics of all countries could not influence peoples' minds at present in the same way as in the past. As a witty Western writer once remarked, "the more the world changes, the more it remains the same."

Most of all, writers everywhere desire liberty for themselves. Actually, what they ask for is freedom from censor-

ship of all kinds. The easiest way for writers to achieve their purpose is to resort to fiction. Doubtless when fiction achieves a high level of excellence it provides an excellent medium for spreading new philosophies and ideas among the unsophisticated, as well as youth in its formative period. We have to grant that this is true also of all good writing. But fiction has the advantage of saying things in a less obtrusive manner. As Tagore said, "truth in her dress finds facts too tight, but in fiction she moves with ease." First of all it captures the young and then the old. It can say a thing definitely without seeming so much as to intend to say it. The art of a novelist is hence considerably more difficult. The novel is a piece of indefinite length. It may be as long as Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or as short as Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*.

In order to impart probability to a story and to make the characters live, the author has to narrate a series of incidents and facts that are by themselves not so interesting, though highly relevant for the development of the plot. The interest in the story has to be sustained at all costs. Nevertheless, the novel may also degenerate into one of sheer plot-interest, only satisfying the craving for prickly surprises at every turn. The natural and the normal sometimes yield to the grotesque and the obscene. Sexual themes are often the final resort of those whose minds constantly need external stimulants. One feels that the indecency of imagination displayed by a writer may also result from a feeling that the soil of literature is exhausted and that only by digging it deeper and working in the subsoil can it be made richer. Such an attempt may frequently end in the subsoil alone coming up to the surface. If the great artists of all lands refrained from doing this, it was because they knew that the subsoil is barren and nothing will grow in it. We can conclude that the absorption of the story-writer in the sexual life of man is bound to be sterile of literary results. There is no doubt that the adolescent mind is interested in sex above all else, a subject which provides little food for the imagination. If one is asked as to where a line should be drawn, it would be impossible to lay down any rule. All that can be said is that decorum of one type or

another is as essential to the arts as it is to social life, and that without such self-imposed restraints, the arts may tend to sink into monotony or triviality. Valmiki and Shakespeare knew a great deal about the lower life of man and the quagmires of human imagination, but their work proves not that they were too great prudes but too great artists to put everything into their writing. Indeed a work of art is a masterpiece of suppression no less than of expression.

The short story, on the other hand, can by its very nature attain a level of perfection and it may not be impossible to collect a good number of short stories of recent years, which would compare favourably with similar collections in other parts of India or of the world. As we know, the short story deals with a single well-defined subject, an occurrence or incident or a closely related series of incidents, spiritual or material, which is complete. Further, it is so compact a unit that one finds it impossible to add to or eliminate anything from the perfect specimen. Approximation to some sort of perfection in this form is within the reach of any devoted artist, as it is not in the novel, which demands of its votaries greater ability to sustain the reader's interest.

A heartening aspect of the literary scene is the improvement in our standards of literary criticism. Critics today are better equipped than their predecessors. They are not prepared to accept anything too ephemeral in value, too clever or too preoccupied with sex for just these qualities alone. There is a visible disapproval of stories which can at best only divert the mind or regale the morbidity of the reader.

Against this background one is able to discern the landmarks of the literary scene. Many writers are producing in good faith books which are more or less enjoyable, more or less the result of some kind of discipline in writing. Not all are of the same level in substance and execution, not all evenly maintain high standards, but most possess some merit which justifies their existence. Occasionally, too, we find originality of thought which is absolutely authentic as well as profundity of expression. Some have charm, some are outdated; some

cater to the "middle-brows" while some are acceptable even to those whose taste is unquestioned and who are familiar with foreign writers.

Among the names that come tripping to one's memory in the realm of fiction, one spreads itself over a period of two decades and more because of the unique achievement and the intellectual greatness of its owner. "Kalki," the veteran novelist, shows no lessening of his powers for turning out an endless series of historical romances and novels dealing with social themes. The great popularity he has achieved has secured him a top rank among the best-selling writers of the day. His work proves that literature survives because of its fidelity to the vision of life the author possesses, and that his services to the ideal scarcely get corrupted by money or applause. If one surveys the entire field of literature, one finds there is no great book which is not essentially the work of an honest man—a testament of faith.

Among other notable writers whose books run into several editions, P. M. Kannan is a name to reckon with. His *Vazhvin Oli* secured the prize awarded by the Kalai Valarchi Kazhagam, a body started purely for the promotion of Tamil literature. His analysis of human psychology is convincing enough to please even the fastidious. In *Kannikadanam*, his latest work, he reaches heights which extend the vocabulary of achievement.

Sankar Ram is a writer of distinction, who writes with equal facility in English and Tamil, and whose dexterity consists in his vivid portraiture of the poor and the lowly in this vast land of grinding poverty. Y. Mahalinga Sastri, whose scholarship in Sanskrit and English stand him in good stead when he devotes his attention to writing, has recently produced a novel, *Namondru Ninaikka*, exposing the weaknesses and follies of a rich household during a marriage celebration. Gentle satire and unobtrusive humour mark his work.

The handsome awards given by publishing houses for the best specimens of fiction have encouraged this branch of literary activity. The Kalaimagal Publishers yearly award

Rs. 1,000 to the best Tamil novel from among those submitted by competitors. This has led to the discovery of talent among many women writers. Rajam Ramamurthy, K. Saraswathi Ammal, "Anuthama" Rajam Krishnan, have all become known to a large section of the Tamil reading public as a result of these awards.

"Ka. Sri. Sri.," a writer whose name has become widely known on account of his translations of Khandekar of Maharashtra, is himself the author of an absorbing story called "*Katradi*," which has since been published in book form. By his translation of Khandekar's *Krounchavadha* he has endeared himself to a grateful public.

Akhilan, a well-known novelist and short-story-writer, has broken all records of previous sales since the publication of his recent novel entitled *Nenjin Alaigal. Idaya Nadam* by Chidambara Subramanian can easily be picked out of a hundred such medium-sized novels for its sensitive portrayal of the human heart in search of Reality. Ka. Na. Subramanian's *Poothevu* and *Oru Nal* depict the social changes which have appeared in Hindu society in the wake of modernistic ideas. Arvi, perhaps the youngest in the group of present-day novelists, emerges with flying colours in competition with his elders by his keenness of perception and understanding of the delicate nuances of romantic human relationships. In *Yuvathi* he shows how reason ultimately triumphs in the conflict between passion and duty, while *Anaiya Vilakku* contains a plea for marriage reform within the framework of a conservative ideology. In his books the villages of Tamilnad as well as her towns emerge as fully apprehended entities realistically conveyed. Dr. Tripurasundari or "Lakshmi" has contributed to the region of fiction with many readable novels. M. Varadarajanar, an erudite Tamil scholar and writer of chaste Tamil, has proved that the scholar need not always be buried in his musty tomes, but is also capable of contributing something to the modern hinterland. His *Kallo Kaviyamo*, a novel of social life, well merited the Kalai Valarchi Kazhagam award for the best novel of the year which it received.

New political groups with strange philosophies of their own are trying to play a part in the literary field. Iconoclasm is one of the main channels of their zeal for reform. But a remarkable feature of this group is the vigour and trenchancy marking the spoken as well as the written word of its adherents. They inebriate minds already prone to their influence, and much of their philosophy strikes out new paths towards a well-defined goal. Annadurai, Karunanidhi and their group arrest even the indifferent and the disinclined by the power of their language. Not only novels but plays, stories, essays and poems continue to appear in large numbers as a result of these efforts.

The short story has come to stay and has proved to be a splendid medium of self-expression. Established names like those of "Ku. Pa. Ra." and Pudumai Pithan have made Tamilnad proud of their achievements in this field. There are others like "Thi. Ja. Ra.," L. S. Ramamritham, T. B. Kumaraswami, Na. Pichamurthi, T. Janakiraman, K. Saraswathi Ammal, B. S. Ramaiah, "Guhapriyai," Gowri Ammal "Ki. Ra.," Chellappa, Somu, Devan, Vindan, "Ka. Na. Su.," Arvi, K. V. Jaganathan, Thumilan, R. S. Desikan, Alagirisami, Raghunathan, Anai Kunjithapatham, "Kumudini," Saroja Ramamurthi, "Anuthama," Senapathi and L.R.V., who have handled the technique of the short story with real distinction. K. V. Jaganathan is an adept in the spoken as well as the written word. T. N. Kumaraswami has a mellifluous style which has been enriched by his linguistic versatility. Some of these writers have been the recipients of prizes given by the Kalai Valarchi Kazhagam.

Rajaji, whose short stories have earned him the title of a writer of distinction, has, during the period under review, given us two books, one called *Baja-Govindam*, a beautiful exposition of the great Sankaracharya's song of self-abnegation, and the other *Sri Ramakrishna Upanishadam*, written on the sayings of the saint of Dakshineswar. Rajaji's achievement affords us wonderful proof of how a mind which is compelled to dwell constantly on mundane affairs like politics and public administration can rise to heights of spiritual

exaltation by resorting to our great storehouses of knowledge and wisdom.

In the field of biography, little has been done. It is not the dearth of personalities or exemplary characters in South India that has brought us to this pass, but want of enthusiasm on the part of writers for a field where much could actually be done to enrich literature. Here and there some attempts have been made to bring to light the main features of some of the important leaders of thought. For instance, V. R. Sundaraman's *Pugazh Putha Tamizhar* is a laudable effort in this direction. Raghunathan's enlivening sketch of the life of an artist of Pudumai Pithan's stamp can honourably take its place in any collection of short biographical sketches. M. P. Sivagnana Gramani's *Kattabomman* is a noteworthy account of the life of a brave-hearted Tamil in the days of the East India Company, who strove with every fibre of his being not to yield to the foreigner even an inch either of his soil or his manhood.

Full-sized autobiographies have appeared by some of our worthies in more than one walk of life. MM. Swaminatha Iyer's *Encharitram* is a long and detailed account of the life of a savant which is packed with dates and historical data rather than a personal and imaginative treatment of events. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan's *Ninaivu Alaigal* is a record of his political life, concisely expressed. Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai's *En Kathai* alone reflects the art of autobiography with all the richness and romance it is capable of. Pillai has the capacity to laugh at himself and can view himself objectively against the background of his failures and achievements. A. V. Subramania Iyer, K. V. Jagannathan, M. Varadarajanar, A. S. Gnanasambandam, R. P. Sethu Pillai, S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, P. Sri Acharya, M. Rajamanickam Pillai, to mention only a select few, have delved into *Sangam* literature, the *Silappadhikaram*, the *Kambaramayanam* and the *Kural*, and placed the Tamil reading public under a deep debt of gratitude by presenting old classics in a fresh light and in a new perspective.

Short essays have also been written which capture us by their flair for significant utterance coupled with lightness of

touch. "*Pozhudu Pokku*" by "Thi. Ja. Ra." and "*Vambu Pechu*" by K. Savithri Ammal, both revive in us a desire for meditation over life's little incidents and minor tragedies, while T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar's "*Vazhkaaiyin Adippadai*" has a subtle and delicate charm of its own.

Plays have not been very plentiful during this period, exceptions being T. N. Subramanian's *Rajasundari*, a historical play which concerns itself with incidents of the Chola period and Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai's *Maman Magal*, which highlights the social problems of the day.

Translations of foreign authors by a clever writer like V. Swaminatha Sarma supply information about foreign countries and their outstanding personalities. Marisami has also done useful work in this field. O. V. Alagesan's translation of *Glimpses of World History* by Jawaharlal Nehru, two-thirds of which has so far appeared, is a fine achievement. Kumarasami, Senapathi and A. K. Jayaraman, by their translations of fine Bengali fiction, have earned for themselves an abiding niche in literature.

Periasami Thooran, editor of the Tamil Encyclopædia, and his band of assistants, such as P. Thirukootasundaram Pillai, have been expending their energies on a task the usefulness of which cannot be overestimated. Periasami Thooran is also the composer of songs which he personally sets to music.

Subjects of scientific interest are greatly popularized by able presentation in simple language and with adequate illustrations by Captain N. Seshadrinathan, P. N. Appuswami, J. P. Manickam, R. K. Viswanathan, Dr. N. R. Srinivasan, Rajeswari Ammal and others. A. N. Sivaraman's *Arasiyal Amaippu* as well as *Pira Nadugalil Sthala-Sthamanangal* are praiseworthy attempts at expounding in clear and simple language the main features of the Indian Constitution and the working of Local Self-Government in foreign countries. The Kalai Valarchi Kazhagam has contributed to the encouragement of similar attempts at dealing with different subjects of practical usefulness, like soil-improvement, aspects of agriculture, maternity, public speaking and the like.

T. K. Chithambaranatha Mudaliar, more widely known as "T.K.C.," has done more to create a love of Tamil than many who have turned out books by the day and articles by the hour. His *Kambaramayanam*, which has come in for much controversial beating, conveys the quintessence of Kampan's art and soul and is undoubtedly the finest anthology ever published of that great writer's work. "T.K.C.'s" mind and heart were so much attuned to Tamil poetry that any one of his numerous weekly writings in *Kalki* during the period under survey can testify to the poise and insight of the real *rasika* in him.

However inadequate this survey, we cannot ignore the poets and writers of delightful verse we have in Tamilnad today. Though the great Bharathi's fire and vision remain unequalled there are bards in our midst whose work promises some day to approximate to his. Bharathi Dasan, Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai, Sudhananda Bharathi, S. D. S. Yogiar, Kambadasan, Surabhi Somu, Kothamangalam Subbu, A. Srinivasaraghavan, Muthu Sivan Triloka Sitaram, Shalivahanan, Kalaivanan, A. V. R. Reddiar, Thuraivan, V. Duraiswami, Kuyilan are all names to conjure with in the field of poetry.

The young people of our day have a very realistic outlook on life. They believe at the same time in emulating the best in other countries. High above all minor points of difference, marked by everything that makes an author outstanding in the life of the Tamil race, sits one man. His years are many; his work is deemed not too exclusive for the ordinary reader; his disinterested devotion to poetry has been lifelong. To appreciate his work is to prove one's right to be considered discriminating; and to share his æsthetic ideals is to feel that one moves in the same sphere as a rare and genuine spirit aware of the finest points of his art, untouched by any of the controversies of the hour. This grand old Sentinel of the South, Kavimani Desikavinayagam Pillai, continues to grace the poetical horizon with his presence.

Books of travel are coming into vogue. For instance A. K. Chettiar's *Olagam Sutrum Tamizhan* is a simple yet gripping

account of his world tour. Lakshmanan Chettiar has also done similar service. Books on literary criticism have engaged the attention of writers like A. S. Gnanasambandam whose *Ilakkiya Nool* is a scholarly approach to the subject while Raghunathan's *Ilakkiya Vimarsanam* is a notable work marked by conciseness and precision. Screen plays as well as juvenile literature have their adherents in the Tamil literature of the day.

It may perhaps be out of place at a conference of Indian writers to claim any outstanding qualities for the Tamils. Nevertheless it is pardonable to point out that the Tamil genius has never allowed any narrowness to enter its basic culture. If today the Tamils are appreciated for the preservation of the Carnatic system of music, for keeping in an uncorrupted form the *sampradaya* of *Bharata Nāṭyam* and for advocating continued interest in English literature, it is because they have the capacity both to give and to take freely of good things, wise things and great things wherever they may happen to exist.

May this trait continue to flourish in our soil or, for that matter, any other trait that is worthy of acquisition for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of the many!

RECENT TRENDS IN TELUGU LITERATURE (1948-53)

SHRI A. JANAKI RAM

"The proper end of the Romantic is to achieve the Classic."

—T. S. ELIOT

Two events of major significance in the history of modern Telugu literature took place in 1952. One was the award of a World Prize for "*Galivana*" (Cyclone), a short story in Telugu by Palagummi Pādma Raju which was adjudged the second-best short story in a world competition. The award gave a world status to the Telugu language.

The second event was the *Shasti Abda Purthi Uthavamu* (the 60th birthday celebration) of Siva Sankara Sastry, the Founder-President of the Sahiti Samiti. The meeting of several writers to honour the veteran scholar and critic gave occasion for a sincere appraisal of Telugu literature today in all its aspects, and a formulation of methods to intensify the work of the Samiti which, for over two decades, had been in the vanguard of the literary renaissance in Andhra.

Much water has replenished the stream of modern Telugu literature. The earlier impetus towards a pronouncedly lyrical expression in poetry has had to yield ground to the urge to stark realism. Writers are now being enjoined to deal with everyday subjects affecting the mass of humanity, individual experience, however genuine and however valuable, being considered of limited permanent benefit to the people. Life in all its gruesomeness is to be depicted as it is.

*Pranasakhudu Nakosame Pampinadu Pallaki
ana hridayamu jallumaniye
Veedaniviyogamuna vegu mrodumenu thaliru
thoranamai sumadamamayee.*

My heart trembles when I hear that my beloved
has sent his palanquin for me,
My frail frame turned wooden through long separation
bursts into a festoon of sweet blossoms.

So sang a poet of the Renaissance in Telugu literature 20 years back. The silent garden awakens to the rhythmic cries of the palanquin-bearers and the brook that flows by ripples in its deep slumber. The palanquin passes on laden with the hope of spring; and its graceful curve takes on a rainbow hue as it bears within it the living memory of many a sweet dream.

This poem by Krishna Sastri may be considered typical of the remarkable literary revival that was the product of the impact of philosopher-poets like Saadi, Tagore and Iqbal on sensitive souls nurtured on the most poetic elements from the classics in Telugu and Sanskrit, and imbued with the writings of Keats, Shelley and Bridges.

The rhythm inherent in the Telugu language and the beautiful cadence of its metrical verse is apparent here:—

Pranayavallaki Pallaki
Prasavabhara Vasanthavallika Pallaki
Sakrachapa Vakrarcakha Pallaki
Madhuswapna sakha Pallaki.

But that was before the World War and the atom bomb. Listen (in translation) to what the same poet says in 1952:—

The din of the battle for Korea; the never-healing ulcer of Malaya—pestilence and famine knocking incessantly at our door.... there is Death in every breath.
 This must be the final catastrophe; otherwise, why should Man hungrily crunch the emaciated bones of fellow man shedding the last vestige of the human in him?

This change is not isolated. It has coloured the work of a number of modern writers in Telugu. So marked has the trend been that Chief Justice Rajamannar, himself an eminent writer and a great critic, was led to observe that softness and sweetness have given way to harshness and bitterness, and young writers following the lead of "Sri Sri," a poet of the new era, now choose for their material, in place of dewdrops and sweet zephyrs,

Ornament and red sandalwood,
 The warm blood of a deer killed by the tiger,
 Red flames that shoot forth from Rudra's fiery eyes
 And the outstretched tongue of Kali.

"Arudra" represents an even more extreme trend. He is impatient for change. He complains that there is chaos everywhere and that there are Bren guns in his brain:—

Brainlo Brengunla,
Rainla alochanala train.

Notice how the English words are dovetailed into Telugu expressions:—

Brainlo pain
Prathi veinlo machinegun rain.

And there is surrealism too. In a poem entitled "Seconds" "Arudra" visualizes the tremendous effort required to move

the second hand in the gigantic clock that represents man's achievements. "Push all and heave, Push and heave!" cries his humanity—"Push the second-hand and heave away all our troubles!"

It is interesting, however, to turn to another contemporary poet, Mokkapati Krishnamurthy, who is also a painter of some distinction. As he sees with the eye of a practising artist, he is able to create exquisite vignettes in words:—

The whispering blue of distant peaks,
The urgent murmur of mountain streams
And the incessant beckoning of winding hill-paths.

Each line paints a picture for you as the poet climbs the historic hill of Nagarjuna, where, unexpectedly, he comes upon some marble sculpture and exclaims:—

Soft! A sudden turn in the path reveals Her:
A marble nymph of immaculate grace
The very Dream of the Artist come true!

The impact of the new writing from the West is felt not only in poetry but in all forms of modern Telugu writing. The sketch is becoming highly developed; and more than one writer takes after the "stream of consciousness" style initiated by James Joyce and perfected by Virginia Woolf. "Buchi Babu," a well-read writer, describes in his "*Chaitanya Sra-vanthi*" all that happens in the mind of a tramway passenger during a half-hour journey in a Madras tramcar. The train of ideas that comes into the mind of a middle-class citizen, an officer perhaps, on his way to work, gets entangled with his thoughts and observations of each word and action of his fellow passengers. Sometimes he gets beyond the barrier of the immediate spoken word and tries to perceive, without inhibition, the thought that must have originated the expression. In this mental analysis delicacies of convention are forgotten; and, by the time the passenger reaches his destination, we who have been his fellow travellers have caught a vivid glimpse of a colourful cross-section of middle-class life in a crowded city.

A striking example of the new writing in Telugu, almost the best so far, is *Alpajeevi* (An Insignificant Person), a novel-

ette not yet published in book form, by Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry. The story concerns a very ordinary man, an utterly unknown office clerk, but the treatment is so skilful that Subbiah the insignificant pervades the entire novel and absorbs your interest exclusively; others come and go only to be his foils. Direct narrative is at a minimum. The new technique (for Telugu) employed here reminds one of James Joyce in his *Ulysses*, and in certain places even *Finnegans Wake*: an utterly frank analysis of what goes on in the mind of Subbiah, as the clerk at his office, at home with his wife, who thinks she is too good for him, and in the busy streets of the town where, quite unnoticed, he is able to take in every aspect of the variegated scene before him. He thinks aloud, as it were, of what he sees, and remarks openly on the foibles of his fellow creatures, this man of no significance. The translation of each thought-form into a crisp sentence replete with an idea bears a close resemblance to the style of William Saroyan. A stray word sets up a chain reaction of ideas, sometimes closely related but, quite often, of no immediate or apparent continuity but of considerable significance. The prose sometimes acquires a very attractive cadence as the repetition of the middle word in each succeeding sentence achieves a peculiar effect, emphasizing the essential. Subbiah, snubbed by his superiors at the office, and neglected at home by his handsome but callous wife, seeks solace in what would be termed an illicit association with a schoolmistress, but his ideas and his aspirations, his hopes and his futile search for the Permanent, call forth our fullest sympathy. Perhaps, he reflects the life, not of one man but of a frustrated generation, and that is why this work is so appealing. Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry is indeed a writer of great promise.

"Buchi Babu" has also to his credit a novel of arresting beauty: *Chivaraku Migiledi* (What Remains). The ideals that modern youth, particularly in Andhra, strives for and often fails to achieve come in for close scrutiny. Dayanidhi, the hero, strains every nerve to understand the world around him; but the world does not care to understand him. He is

unable to achieve happiness for himself or for his beloved Komali; but he is ever faithful to his own ideals. In his own way, he attempts to bring about a better state of things and fails miserably, losing his all in that vain attempt. Fond of poetry, the author often lapses into poetic diction in this novel:—

A frail blossom that has dropped to earth
under the weight of its own perfume and the
pressure of its own brilliant colours;

The pristine purity of a snow-flake that has
dropped from the mountain peak;

The piercing core of a midnight flame;

The dumb agony of souls lost in slumber at
dead of night....

“Buchi Babu’s” art is so skilful and his language so effective that you catch yourself cherishing the memory of Komali even more ardently than Nidhi himself. She becomes immortal in your eyes, although in the story she dies a sudden death. It is this effacement of all that is dear to him that forces Nidhi to exclaim: “What Remains?” The answer will always be an echo.

Another first-rate novel is *Keelu Bommalu* (Marionettes) by G. V. Krishna Rao. *Keelu Bommalu* is a record of contemporary life in the present-day village with its close association with city life. Sheer selfishness and utter unscrupulousness are placed side by side with patriotic feeling and admirable selflessness. An attempt is made to mirror life as it is; the author tries to show that the main actors in this drama are marionettes, not being endowed with the capacity to control their actions. Shri Krishna Rao’s style is elegant and he succeeds in creating a perfectly faithful and realistic atmosphere at every stage.

Chief Justice P. V. Rajamannar is a well-known playwright. One of his recent plays, *Yemi Magavallu* (Oh! These Men!), is a powerful condemnation of obsolete, yet tenaciously clinging ideas of propriety, and the still popular insistence on one law for the man and another for the woman. The heroine of the play, a victim of great injustice, finds that

marriage without understanding is a sham, and that all men are deceivers. When she walks up to the centre of the stage and in utter desperation, snaps her *mangalasutra*, exclaiming: "*Yemi Magavallu*," one does not only feel pity for her but is also filled with remorse for an order that, at the moment, one is powerless to change.

Nagu Bamu (The White Cobra) is a recent play by Shri Rajamannar, a powerful one-act play set against the background of the Ajanta caves when the great Buddhist monk-artists embellished the walls with wonderous works of art. Nagasundara, a very handsome as well as able artist, is busy creating a fresco painting of an inspiring subject, the Defeat of Mara, when he is introduced by his Guru to Jayasree, the Andhra princess of great beauty and unique artistic accomplishments. Jayasree takes an immediate interest not only in the work of the artist but also in the artist himself. He is to her the very personification of the ideal artist, as pictured and adored by her. Her increasing interest in the subject being painted leads to her demonstrating before him some of the celebrated dance poses of Urvashi, the central figure in his painting. In spite of the valiant efforts of the newly ordained monk, Jayasree captures his heart. As the fresco progresses the Urvashi in the picture is revealed to be a lifelike replica of the princess. This mutual adoration would have led to serious consequences but for the sudden incident of a white cobra emerging from a crevice in the cave and striking the artist as he raises his brush for the final touches, inflicting on him what would have been a fatal wound but for the lightning intervention of the princess who sucks the poison from the wound. She saves the life of her beloved but loses her own in the attempt. The dialogue, throughout, is very effective and although the action is represented to have taken place some two thousand years ago, the problem has a universal and almost topical appeal; the conflict between utter devotion to duty and the irresistible urge to emotional fulfilment concerns each one of us today.

In all his writings Shri Rajamannar demonstrates Franz Kafka's dictum: "Test yourself on Humanity. It makes the

doubtful doubt, the believer believe."

Another playwright who is very forceful is V. R. Narla. In one of his most remarkable plays, *Vantena* (The Bridge), the idiom is so closely associated with the life of the people whom the author portrays, and there are so many quaint expressions to each page, that if you want to enjoy the play you have no option but to learn the language. The theme, however, is universal, dealing with the completion of a small bridge connecting a hitherto remote village with the main road and how it results in a turbulent upheaval in the lives of the peasants living so near, yet so far, from town life. Social and ethical values cherished for years as permanent are changed overnight.

Athreya's *Addakompalu* (Rented Hovels) depicting the vicissitudes in the life of a middle-class family—here, that of a Government servant—living in the city has lately been very popular on the "reformed stage." Of great intrinsic worth, the play has received a fillip from the Progressive Writers' Movement and thereby attracted much notice. The poorly paid Government servant, after much cogitation, receives a bribe, and suffers the penalty for it. His devoted wife is a model from real life and there is a brother who is of a tremendously violent character, acting as a foil to enhance the nobility of the elder brother. The play is regarded as a very important contribution to playwriting in Telugu.

One may say that the short story in Telugu has become more "practical." Yet, some of the best of the published stories are more introspective than narrative. They seem to be based on events that have actually happened to the author or which the author would like to happen to him, but which are capable of universal significance. One such play, by a woman writer, is entitled *Tellarke Muhurtamu* (On the Eve of the Wedding) and describes the thoughts of a young and sensitive bride as she faces an event of such tremendous import to her future life. Her days of comparative irresponsibility are over, and she requires all the courage at her command to accustom herself to the idea that henceforth she will share every aspect of her

life with one who is till now an utter stranger to her. Her whole aim will have to be to bring happiness into his life, even if it has to mean her losing her own identity.

The Andhras may justly be proud of Palagummi Padma Raju, who, in a recent world competition, secured the second prize for his short story in Telugu entitled "Cyclone." This story, which the author himself has translated into English, describes vividly how the overwhelming force of circumstance takes a powerful hand in the shaping of events. A learned professor, of a somewhat Puritan turn of mind, while on his way to address a theological gathering, is detained at a way-side station by the sudden onset of a violent cyclone. In the damp and desolate waiting-room, he is thrown into the company of an attractive beggar-woman who also seeks shelter there from the cruel elements. The inevitable happens—something which the professor, with his strict moral code, could never have even dimly visualized in his normal life. Following the moral catastrophe, the beggar-woman is killed by lightning, leaving the professor the richer perhaps for his experience of the intensely human element that so unexpectedly came into his life.

Padma Raju is also a poet experimenting in new modes. He has written what may be described as one of the earliest surrealist poems in Telugu, "*Puriti Pata*" (The Song of Child-birth), wherein he describes the birth of a baby, putting this event in clever juxtaposition with dawn. The imagery is unique and marks a departure towards a definite phase of new poetry. We find expressions such as:—

With slow tread darkness creeps away like bitter cold.

Silence was falling in gentle showers—like the sound
of falling stars.

Time got enmeshed in the cleft teeth of the wheels
of the clock, and could not move....

Of late, Hyderabad has come to be the seat of intense literary activity in Telugu. Poems, short stories and powerful articles dealing with the current topics of the day have been penned by young writers in Telangana. Dasarathi, who is very young, exhibits in his writings a knowledge and rare insight into

what makes for permanence in human progress towards perfection. He would live essentially to be a people's poet, to write and sing of their hunger and yearning; but he sings not only for today but also for the generations yet to come. When invited recently to say something about the Telugu New Year he sang:—

The breath of spring is here, and each new-born
flower lends eloquence to trees turned dumb
through Autumn....

I bear with me the perfume of a hundred thousand
New Year garlands; but how can I say which among
them is sweeter than the rest?

The long poem in Telugu, which had gone out of vogue for some time, appears to be coming back into its own. Prominent in this category is the *Ramayana Kalpatharu* of Viswanatha Satyanarayana. The new *Ramayana*, though containing the main incidents as narrated by Valmiki, is written for an entirely different audience living in an entirely different age. A new concept is introduced at every stage and the Telugu *kavya* has all the freshness of a new creation.

Literary criticism is to be found mostly in periodicals. No single book of a high standard has yet appeared; but well-informed articles, some dealing with lesser-known aspects of the classics and some interpreting or evaluating the most recent literary works, appear in the periodicals. The name of Chirumamilla Siva Ramakrishna Prasad stands prominent in this sphere today as that of a well-informed and just critic.

One immediate effect of the development of the film industry has been the employment of almost all the best writers in the literary field to provide script and scenarios for the films. This has resulted in the enrichment of the quality of the film-script and, conversely, in a certain curtailment in the creative activity of these authors in the realm of pure literature, the impetus to work being the high price paid for each script.

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A detailed survey of literary activity during the period under review would lead one to think that the seeker of

novelty in modern Telugu literature has consciously and unconsciously fulfilled one or the other of the requirements set by James Agate, who said:—

Novelty in my view, is permissible (1) when it is the only way of saying something new; (2) when it is as good a way of saying something new to which the charm of freshness is then added; (3) when it is a better way of saying something old; (4) when it is as good a way of saying something old, plus the charm of freshness.

Telugu writing today is in a state of transition. The great heritage of the classics, followed by the products of the romantic revival, is there. Young writers of the *avant garde* visualize a thorough sweep towards the ultra-modern. Yet, the most responsible opinion in literary circles shares the view of T. S. Eliot when he says:—

While we speak the same language, and have fundamentally the same culture as that which produced the literature of the past, we want to maintain two things; a pride in what our literature has already accomplished, and a belief in what it must still accomplish in the future.

URDU LITERATURE AFTER 1947

DR. MOHIUDDIN QADRI ZORE

The year 1947 is important in the history of Urdu literature because the dawn of Independence was followed by communal riots, displacement of persons and dislocation of society which affected mostly those regions where Urdu is commonly understood and spoken. It had its natural repercussions on Urdu literature. This period of about eight years may be termed a transition period or rather a period of travail. Such periods do come in the lives of individuals and nations, though not often. In the train of Independence have come several problems which the governments have as yet not been able to solve and settle amicably. The "Language Problem" in India has taken rather an unexpected and queer turn which, though seemingly quite natural, is fraught with several dangers. It has divided the people of India into Language Groups and may further develop to divide India into

Language Regions, politically called Linguistic States.

The Partition of India into Bharat and Pakistan caused a bifurcation among the lovers, supporters and writers of Urdu. The group on the other side of the geo-political line, in spite of favourable environment and governmental patronage, does not seem to be satisfied. The group on this side has many reasons for complaint, though they are of a different type. Pakistan is not a secular state and this nature of the government has caused a division in the ranks of Urdu writers there. There is a group which aims at creating a purely Islamic literature and the other one insists on making it representative of life with all its variations. There are reasons to believe that the gulf will widen some day or the other to affect, perhaps adversely, the Urdu of India and the people who speak and write it.

In India, Urdu and the Urdu-speaking people, who are greater in number than those who speak any other Indian language, had to face an attack from many sides, sometimes by State Governments and sometimes by the people of a particular language region. This assault against Urdu has, in most cases, no obvious ill-will or malice against the language itself. Sometimes it was love of one's mother tongue, sometimes the priority and importance attached to the *Rashtra-Bhasha* and sometimes the 15-year lease given to English, which brought it about. As a result, Urdu, in spite of being one of the 14 languages mentioned in the Indian Constitution, could not find any place in the census of 1951. The division of India into language regions does not allot any region to Urdu though it is spoken and understood almost everywhere, in some regions by many and in some by a few. Sometimes some State Ministers and officials have denied that it is a language at all. Many semi-official and private organizations as well as individuals working for the progress and development of a particular language (perhaps merely out of the love and zeal for that language) either tried to kill Urdu with indifference and apathy or opposed it as an alien tongue, forgetting the conspicuous part Urdu poets, writers and speakers like Hasrat Mohani, Josh Malihabadi, Brij

Narayan Chakbast, Premchand, Zafar Ali Khan, Moulana Mohmed Ali Jauhar, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Lala Lajapat Rai, Pandit Motilal Nehru and many others, had played in the struggle for freedom.

Even in such unfavourable circumstances the poets and writers of Urdu refused to be either intimidated or paralyzed. It is highly gratifying that just at the time when Urdu was being called the language of the Muslims alone, Hindu and Sikh poets and writers in Urdu by their speeches and writings gave the lie to the opposers of that language. They have proved that Urdu is neither the language of the Muslims alone nor a foreign tongue. It is Indian and belongs to all Indians, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, and all those who speak it or understand it whether they live in Tamilnad or in the Panjab. It is a fact that within the last eight years non-Muslim writers of Urdu have produced a great number of books and magazines. Such a number had never before appeared within such a short period of time.

Such illustrious non-Muslim writers as Pandit Brijmohan Datatraya Kaifi, Kishan Pershad Koal, Fireq Gorakhpury, Dr. Mohan Singh Divana, Munawar Lakhnawi, Tilokchand Mahroom and Josh Malsiani have always remained great lovers and supporters of Urdu. Among younger men Krishnan Chander, Kanahyalal Kapoor, Jagannath Azad, Arsh Malsiani, Hans Raj Rahbar, Radhe Sham Ahqar, Balraj Komal, Rajindar Singh Bedi, Prakash Pandit, Om Prakash, Gopal Mittal, Mahendernath, Balvant Singh and Naresh Kumar have written with great power and enriched the Urdu language and literature in all its aspects. Papers which they edit have helped to start and develop new and wholesome trends in Urdu literature. It seems as if they were pioneering a Renaissance of the tradition prevalent between 1300 and 1800 A.D., under the patronage of the Bahmani, Qutb Shahi and Adil Shahi kingdoms of the Deccan.

Simplicity of expression and Indianization of Arabic and Persian words were characteristics of that period and glimpses of this tendency are to be seen in the writings of Nazir Akbar

Abadi, Mohsin Kakorvi, Chakbast and Prem Chand in the earlier half of the 20th century. This trend has been revived in recent years. The Partition of India has added pathos and a nostalgia to the writings of those who have had to leave their homes and come over to the Indian side, to make it their second home. The same is the case with those who write in Urdu on the other side of the border, though they are confronted with other problems also.

It is interesting to note that all these problems which the writers of Urdu, whether in India or Pakistan, have to face, revolve round the following points:—

1. What should one write and for whom?
2. How should one write, and what should be the style?
3. How can all writers be brought together to form a united front?

It is obvious that the scientific approach and a realistic delineation of the truth ensure success in writing. To be successful in his efforts a writer has to represent the group or the society for which he is writing. He nevertheless has to study in detail the relations among several groups, their feelings and ideologies, their historical and literary traditions as well as the moral, social and political environment of the people he wishes to portray. Modern Urdu writers have not forgotten that only that literature which is written for the masses thrives and becomes popular. As far as the language and form of expression are concerned Urdu poets and writers have borne in mind that in literature which is meant for all, form and mode of expression have to be as simple as possible. Among our writers there are some who cling to the classical mould, some stress style, others continue to preach political or religious points of view while a few may be found who are champions of a sort of blank verse and who transgress the bounds of morality and decency, touching or rather stepping over the border into vulgarity. Most of us, however, are trying to avoid all these and to march forward on the whole-some and progressive way with unflinching zeal and sincerity of purpose. We remember that Urdu is meant for all Indians and is to be understood by all. To this end we try to select

material which appeals to all and express ourselves in a form which is equally intelligible.

It is important that Urdu writers and poets curb any tendency to separatism based on provincialism, or some group jealousy. This tendency has resulted from different political affiliations and points of view, but with the disappearance of the Englishman from the scene all writers who are patriotic and democratic have come together to develop a standard literary taste and a sense of healthy criticism among the writers themselves. Mutual conferences and discussions, expression of views and exposition of ideals can always bring about good results. They can check and control different channels, bringing all into one course. The unexpected and rather hasty disappearance of the enemy appears to have robbed many poets of their only theme—the opposition to and criticism of the British. This has led to a hasty scampering in different directions and writers have converted themselves into provincial patriots, champions of some local language or a political or social organization. The supreme cure for all these meanderings is a united literary front which will carry along with it among others all those who are lagging behind or bring to the right path those who are straying.

All symptoms seem favourable to such a move. Veterans have not blinded themselves to the demands of the new, the votaries of which are no more dazzled by the Red banner. Those who had gone underground have come up to fight, if necessary, and are ready to use constitutional methods. Those who patronized "vulgarity" have abandoned it. Even the "progressive writers" have started writing *ghazals*. They are now filling old bottles with new wine. The peasants and the labourers do not shout slogans "down with this or down with that," but hum to themselves a *ghazal* while the doves of peace hover over their heads. Being an optimist, I feel certain that the united efforts of all will create a healthy environment and our march to progress will be accelerated. Dead leaves will fall of their own accord and we shall see that behind the clouds the sun still shines.

CONCLUSION**PROFESSOR C. R. MYLERU**

When the responsibility of organizing this Conference fell on my shoulders, I wondered how I was going to manage things. Subsequently, this responsibility was shared also by Shri R. Ramanujachari. Thanks to our Vice-Chancellor we have been able to do something, but I do not know to what extent we have been able to satisfy the delegates. The least we can say is that we have done everything we could and if there are many shortcomings we request you to excuse us. It is our good fortune that our Prime Minister in spite of his many preoccupations found it possible to inaugurate this Conference. We are also lucky in having Dr. Radhakrishnan as President of this Conference. The Governor of Madras, the Chief Minister of Madras and the Hon. Shri T. T. Krishnamachari also graced the Conference. Even though they have all gone by now, we extend them a hearty vote of thanks for their participation in the Conference.

The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, has been, of course, a fountainhead of inspiration. He has specially been here for the last 15 days to conduct preparations for this Conference. He has presided over every meeting of the Convenors and the Executive Committee of the Conference, and has looked into every detail connected with the Conference. But for his advice I do not think it would have been possible for the Secretaries of the Conference to do even a fraction of what they have been able to do. I have great pleasure in thanking him for all he has done in making the Conference a success.

We also thank Shri M. R. Jambunathan who has helped us in many ways in organizing this Conference. We have been extremely lucky in getting his co-operation. The University Registrar's office has been working for the last two or three days as a P.E.N. Conference office. I must also thank the convenors of the various sub-committees for their good work.

I thank the volunteer corps, the transport sub-committee in particular, the sanitation committee and the decoration committee for their kind help. We also thank the wives of the members of the staff who have been extremely helpful in decorating the Conference *pandal*. I specially thank the catering committee because, obviously, unless the delegates had been properly fed it would have been very difficult for them to participate in the deliberations of the Conference. I also thank the Cadet Corps who have been helpful in every way. We are also grateful to Shri Bandari, Electrical Engineer, for the excellent microphone and lighting arrangements made at the Conference and to Shri Gopala Ayyangar who had taken up the responsibility of the Treasurership of the Conference. I acknowledge the very great help which Shri R. Ramanujachari has given to the members of the Working Committee in discharging their duties. We are also deeply grateful to the All India Radio for relaying the proceedings of the Conference. Our thanks are due to the press representatives as also to the Films Division of the Government of India. We are also thankful to Shrimati Rukmani Arundale for having taken the trouble to bring her artists all the way from Kalakshetra for entertaining the delegates and the distinguished guests. I thank all the delegates who had come from far and near places to attend this Conference. Once again I request you to pardon us for any shortcomings.

SHRI P. G. SHAH

Those who have worked on the Executive Committee of the All-India Centre of the P.E.N. cannot forget the difficulty which confronted us in arranging the programme of the session. We cannot forget the strain that was caused to Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar in organizing this Conference. I thank, first of all, the Vice-Chancellor, the Joint Secretaries and the Members of the Reception Committee for having taken great pains in connection with the organization of this Conference. My best thanks are due to P.E.N. Members who

have taken the trouble to come here to attend the Conference. Our grateful thanks are due to those who contributed papers for the various symposiums. My thanks are also due to Shri A. Ramanathan Pillai, Dr. A. C. Chettiar, Shri R. Ramanujachari, Shri C. R. Myleru and others. I also thank Shri Shripad R. Tikekar for preparing the *Who's Who* of the P.E.N. All-India Centre. My grateful thanks are due to Shri Jalaluddin Ahmad, Hon. Secretary of the P.E.N. Pakistan Centre, and representatives from other countries including Ceylon.

DEWAN BAHADUR K. M. JHAVERI

I know the difficulties connected with the organization of a Conference of this kind. I also know the difficulties of satisfying those delegates who have come from Bombay and who are very particular about their comforts. We are grateful for all that has been done, and particularly thank Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar for all his kind help. On behalf of not only the snobbish people, whom I represent, but also on behalf of the non-snobbish people who can put up with any amount of discomfort I thank you. I only wish that some time in the future Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar will again invite us to partake of his hospitality, and to participate in the good things which he has been providing here. May he live long!

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

Dewan Bahadur Jhaveri, Shri P. G. Shah, Shri Jambunathan and my friends, I am not going just now to render a conventional response in respect of the vote of thanks. I am deeply sensible that neither the weather nor any other attendant circumstances were such as to conduce to the comfort of the delegates assembled here. We would have been more pleased if this Conference could have been held, as

was originally contemplated, in September. But on account of the indisposition of Madame Sophia Wadia, the indefatigable founder-organizer of the P.E.N., that Conference had to be postponed and it was my privilege to extend the invitation to the P.E.N., which has sponsored the All-India Writers' Conference gathered here. We have done our best and we are thankful for the great meed of appreciation that we might have deserved. We trust that one and all of you will, in leaving this place, forget the shortcomings and remember only the opportunities for communion and collaboration. As I said, I do not propose merely to respond to a formal vote of thanks.

In the course of some speeches today, the future of the P.E.N. organization and its *modus operandi* have been discussed. With your permission, let me say a few words on that topic. In the first place, please remember that this P.E.N. organization is international in character and that the main function of the P.E.N. is to break down barriers and to make the whole world kindred in the manner in which only authors, writers, poets and dreamers can do. In order to achieve this purpose, it is essential that each national organization should do something to justify its universality. Especially is it necessary in a country having as many languages and cultures as ours to make at least an all-Indian approach to the P.E.N. solidarity. In order to achieve this end, this aim, I suggest that the P.E.N. should act as a kind of literary academy. Various academies have been founded and one is proposed to be started by the Government. But the P.E.N. is a non-official organization, transcending all territorial barriers and seeking to bear aloft the standard of art, of literature and of supremacy of thought. The academy of which I am speaking would be an academy to regulate standards and to maintain the highest ideals of our authors. For that purpose the P.E.N. must make itself responsible, not so much for coming together for discussions on matters of detail, but for discussing what has been the most notable work done in India during the year that has passed by. One cannot devote two days or three hurried afternoons or mornings to that work. But

we can work throughout the year through some sub-committees, and come together for a few days in some centre, not really organizing a large numerical attendance but a select body of people qualified to speak on the subject. Their duty will be to find out which poem, which play, philosophical treatise or economic contribution to the thought of this country has deserved the best place in this country. It ought to be possible for the P.E.N. to avoid drawbacks and shortcomings from the point of view of good taste and high standards. It ought to be possible to encourage young authors fighting difficulties and obstacles to come into prominence and to vindicate them in their own eyes and the eyes of the country, although publishers and journalists may not be very charitable to them. It is in this way that academies elsewhere have functioned.

The French Academy has stood for the formulation of the elegance and of the appropriateness of the French language and literature. And, during the 200 years it has stood for the highest possible literary standards in France, it has done great work. I would ask the P.E.N. not so much to bother about men but to bother about the literary character, about the literary output of the country. Let those persons who can command knowledge of more than one language study their literatures, let us say, a limited domain of literature—the essay, the short story, the drama or children's stories—and say: "This year we shall not bother about the whole range of literature, as to try to do so is to attempt the impossible. Let us this year find out what are the best works—children's stories, essays or dramas—that have been turned out. Then let us discuss them in groups, in our own regions, then come together to pool our experiences and our emotions, and crown some work, two or three works, as those deserving of the guardianship of India in that particular domain." You will find that if such work is done, conscientiously, strenuously, continuously and enthusiastically, at the end of the year, your judgment, your criticism, your appraisal of what has been done, will receive recognition in the country and win even monetary rewards which may come to us from the publisher or the Government or somebody else.

Let us, therefore, consider ourselves a body of literary experts brought into existence for the purpose of appraising literary works, establishing, inculcating and fostering literary standards. Let us act as a kind of clearing-house. Let us act as a kind of professional body which would be respected in its literary judgments and lead to the creation of a variety of composite literature, a variety in language and a variety in treatment, but please do stand by the best work that is produced so that it might be said that in India today there has been produced a poem, a drama, an essay or a story or something which can stand comparison with the best work that has been produced elsewhere. If it has not been produced let us not think about it. Let us be perfectly willing to admit that we have been lazy or short-sighted or incompetent or that too much time was devoted to other things. Friends, a Latin poet many centuries ago, referring to authors and to himself in particular, said, "We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal." Always it has been so in the case of literature and of all aspirations for dramatic and literary excellence that the monetary reward has not altogether been consistent with the work of the man or the excellence of the work. If the P.E.N. does its work properly, it will lead to better finance, better membership, better influence and better authority, so that it may serve not only as an academic authority but as a financial distributor to those who are deserving of help. But that will come only when we deserve to be so treated. I, therefore, appeal to fellow members to think of that. This work has not been done adequately anywhere. I have attended many International P.E.N. Conferences—in London, Paris, Edinburgh. In the Conferences which I have attended recently the only subject of dispute and the only subject which elicited interest was, "What shall we do with that great body of people who are outside the Iron Curtain, who do not come and join with us and collaborate in the work of the P.E.N.?" The shadow of Communism, the shadow of ideologies, the shadow of the lack of freedom and the shadow of the shackles and upsets that confront mankind in those parts, are the things under which they are suffering. In this country, fortu-

nately, we have no such difficulties. There is nothing to prevent us from discussion, from criticism, from appraisal, from reward, from praise or from blame excepting our own lack of initiative. Let us, therefore, consider that the P.E.N. exists for the purpose of fulfilling that dream, which is in most of us, that this country, notwithstanding its multiplicity of languages and, up to a point, the multiplicity of cultures, still stands for certain supreme ideals which will unify this land and that those ideals are full of fruitfulness and indicate a bright future. Let the P.E.N. stand as a torch-bearer of these idealistic standards.

A REPORT OF THE OPEN SESSION HELD
ON APRIL 18th, SUNDAY: 3 P.M. TO 4-15 P.M.

Shri P. G. Shah called upon Dr. N. V. Raghavan to explain his scheme for solving the problem of making available Indian publications to foreign countries. His main suggestion was that the P.E.N. should prepare periodical lists of publications and send them to booksellers in foreign countries. Shri S. R. Tikekar said that this was the task of booksellers and librarians and that the Library Association of India had already taken up the work. Shri Shah assured Dr. Raghavan that his suggestion would be acted upon by the Executive Committee if he wrote in greater detail clarifying what the P.E.N. could do.

Professor N. A. Nikam of Mysore University was then called upon to explain his suggestions for: (1) more frequent meetings of the P.E.N. and the discussion of P.E.N. problems; (2) regarding furthering membership; (3) increasing the circulation of *The Indian P.E.N.*; (4) increasing the size of the above journal (including advertisements); and (5) arranging Conferences on a regional rather than an all-India basis.

Shri P. G. Shah at this stage furnished details about the work of the P.E.N. organization to assist other speakers who were asked to help in the discussion. Conferences, he ex-

plained, were not easy to organize. The P.E.N. had tried to hold one at Poona in 1951 but failed to get adequate response, and even the present one could not have been held if Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar had not come forward with an invitation. Because of the ill-health of the founder-organizer, we could not hold it in December, and April 1954 was fixed upon to be accepted in spite of the hot weather. It was not easy to increase membership as some writers found it difficult to pay the annual subscription and because some scrutiny about the status of a writer was necessary before he could be accepted a member. An increase in the size of the journal depended entirely on contributions from members who were not as responsive as desired. The editor would, however, be glad to increase the size if contributions were frequently received. The question of adding advertisement revenue to the resources of the P.E.N. journal would be considered. He suggested that booksellers should be requested to advertise in the journal as this would reach, in all, the 52 centres of the P.E.N. International Association.

Shri Shah then explained that other speakers had asked for permission to speak on "Writing as a Profession," "Bharatiya Sahitya Language Guide Books," "A Common Script," "Suggestions to Writers," "Technological Education in Regional Languages," "Enrichment and Ennoblement of the Indian Languages," "The Nature and Quality of Textbooks in High Schools and Universities." He asked those present if they would not prefer to continue the discussion on P.E.N. problems, instead, in the limited time available. As it was desired that P.E.N. problems alone should be discussed, Shri Shah called upon speakers to speak even though they had not previously notified their intention to speak.

Shri Narendra Dev from Bengal insisted that once a local group had recommended the name of a new member, the Executive Committee should not make further scrutiny. No other speaker supported this view.

Dr. K. C. Varadachari suggested that (1) increasing contacts should be made with local organizations; (2) publication

of outstanding books like the Tamil Encyclopædia published by the Tamil Academy be undertaken; (3) regional conferences be held at all provincial centres on the same dates with similar agenda for each conference.

Professor William Hookens pressed for the enlargement of the P.E.N. journal and its popularization. He suggested that the central P.E.N. organization should request regional governments to buy copies for their universities, cultural institutions and subordinate colleges respectively.

Shri Jambunathan was then asked to propose a vote of thanks. He specially referred to the Vice-Chancellor, the local secretaries, the volunteers, the press representatives and the radio for their contribution in making the Conference a success. Shri Myleru then paid a tribute to all who had helped the Local Secretaries. Shri P. G. Shah dwelt at length on how profoundly the P.E.N. organization was indebted to Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar but for whom the Conference could not have been held, the previous attempt to hold it at Poona having been unsuccessful. He then thanked the delegates for attending in larger numbers than at the two previous all-India P.E.N. Conferences and making it a success. Donors deserved thanks and also the founder-organizer, who in spite of indifferent health had come and kept the spirit of the workers at a high level.

The Conference concluded in a spirit of harmony, good will and feelings of elation at a successful session.

P. G. SHAH

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE*

P.E.N. MEMBERS

Shri Jalaluddin Ahmed	Shri Kappana Krishna Menon
Shri A. S. P. Ayyar	Shri V. Sridhara Menon
Shri Gulabdas Broker	Professor K. K. Mishra
Shri K. Chandrasekharan	Professor Khagendranath Mitra
Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra	Shri L. N. Mohanty
M. Alain Danielou	Shri M. Vasudeva Murthy
Dr. M. L. Das	Shri K. Nagarajan
Shri Nabakishore Das	Shri Satyendra Narayan
Shrimati Chitra Desai	Professor N. A. Nikam
Shri B. R. Deshpande	Shri A. C. Pandeya
Shri Narendra Dev	Shri K. C. Panigrahi
Shrimati Zeenuth Futehally	Shri R. K. Phatak
Principal J. R. Gharpure	Shri S. Variyapuri Pillai
Shri Madan Gopal	Dr. A. D. Pusalker
Shri N. A. Gore	Dr. V. Raghavan
Shri S. C. Guha	Shri N. Ramabhadran
Shri Jogendra Nath Gupta	Shri G. Ramachandran
Professor W. E. Hookens	Shri M. V. V. K. Rangachari
Professor Siddheswar Hota	Shri A. Naga Gopala Rao
Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar	Shri C. K. Nagaraja Rao
Shri M. R. Jambunathan	Shri V. Aswathanarayana Rao
Dewan Bahadur K. M. Jhaveri	Shri K. L. Narasimha Rau
Professor M. M. Jhaveri	Shrimati Lila Ray
Professor H. B. Kulkarni	Swami Sankarananda Saraswati
Professor K. P. Kulkarni	Shri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri
Shri G. Sankara Kurup	Shri Pyadipati Subramania Sastry
Professor M. U. Malkani	
Shri Gurdial Mallik	
Shrimati A. Velayudha Menon	

* We regret that we could not make these lists complete, because of incomplete records, and apologize to those delegates whose names have been inadvertently omitted.

Shrimati K. Savitri Ammal	Shrimati Ranganayaki Thatham
Shri P. G. Shah	
Professor D. C. Sharma	Shri S. R. Tikekar
Dr. Mohan Singh	Professor V. R. Trivedi
Professor V. Sitaramiah	Shri R. N. Vakil
Dr. M. Hafiz Syed	Dr. Ram Kumar Varma
Dr. I. J. S. Taraporewala	Shrimati Sophia Wadia

APPENDIX II

DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE*

NON-MEMBERS

Shri P. Sri Acharya	Shrimati Swarnam Guha-
Shri A. V. Subramania Aiyar	priyai
Shri Mirza H. Askari	Shri Rameshwar Guru
Shri V. N. Nataraja Sastri	Shri N. Hussain
Atreya	Shri L. S. Parthasarathy
Shri E. S. Varatharaja Ayyar	Iyer
Shri Mohanlal Bajpai	Shri Mahendra Kumar Jain
Shrimati Sudarshan Bajpai	Shri T. Janakiraman
Shri M. D. Balasubramanian	Professor R. B. Joshi
Shri K. P. Balasubramanyam	Shri Raavi Kailas
Professor Vasant Bapat	Miss Ann Kerr
Shri Sivaprasad Barooah	Shri R. Krishnamurthy
Mr. John Berry	Shrimati Seethalakshmi
Shri M. R. Bhat	Kumaraswamy
Shri Parag Chaliha	Shri V. N. Kumaraswamy
Shri T. S. Avinashalinga	Shri S. Kunjithapatham
Chettiar	Shri Prabhakar Machwe
Shri Dharendra Lal Dhar	Shri R. B. Mardhekar
Vidwan S. Dandapani	Professor T. M. P. Maha-
Dingar	devan
Shri P. C. Divanji	• Shri S. A. Mallik
Shri Narana Duraikkannan	Shrimati K. Meenakshi
Shri K. Ganesh	Amma

Shrimati S. C. Mehta	Shri P. Ramadan
Shri Gopal Chandra Mishra	Shri T. S. Kothanda Raman
Vidwan Muthu S. M. Mudaliar	Shri P. Kodanda Raman
Shri Nadedi	Shri N. Venkata Rao
Shri S. Shanker Raju Naidu	Mr. C. J. Revel
Shri R. Natesan	Dr. Wilhelm Rau
Shri N. Seshadri Nathan	Dr. B. J. Sandesara
Shri Devendra Namma	Shrimati G. Sarada Devi
Shri Surrinder Singh Narula	Shrimati K. Saraswati Ammal
Mr. Robert C. North	Shri Hari Hara Sarma
Shri Mangesh Padgaonkar	Pandit K. L. Vyasaraaya Sastri
Shri A. Kandaswamy Pillai	Shri S. Subramanya Sastri
Shri D. B. Purani	Shri Y. Mahalinga Sastri
Shri V. S. Purohit	Shri Satyanarayana
Shri S. Raghavachari	Shri Lal Singh
Shri A. Srinivasa Raghavan	Shri R. V. Sowli
Professor M. V. Rajadhya-ksha	Shri N. S. Srinivasan
Shrimati K. Rajalakshmi	Shri K. V. Subbarao
Shri K. Ranga Rajan	Shri Sundaram
Shri A. Janaki Ram	Shri S. T. G. Varadachary
Shri A. K. Ramachandran	Shri A. G. Venkatachari
Shri N. Ramachandran	Shri K. S. Venkataraman
Shrimati T. S. Soundram	Shri R. Venkataraman
Ramachandran	Dr. C. S. Venkateswaran
Shri M. E. Rangaswami	Professor R. Viswanathan
	Dr. S. M. Qadri Zore

APPENDIX III

LITERARY ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONFERENCE

Adyar Library, Madras. •

Andhra Saraswatha Parishath, Hyderabad.

Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, Bombay.

Hyderabad State Hindi Prachar Sabha, Hyderabad.
 Idara Adabiyat Urdu, Hyderabad.
 Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bangalore.
 Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, Poona.
 Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishath, Ernakulam.
 Tamil Academy. Madras.
 Telugu Bhasha Samiti, Madras.

APPENDIX IV

DONORS TO THE P.E.N. ALL-INDIA CENTRE IN RESPECT OF THE CONFERENCE

The Government of India	The Oxford University Press
The International Book	Shri R. K. Phatak
House, Private, Ltd.	Shrimati Tarabai M. Prem-
Shri N. B. Jeejeebhoy	chand
Shrimati Dinbai Khan	Shri A. Naga Gopala Rao
Sir Chunilal B. Mehta	Shri Ambalal Sarabhai
Professor C. N. Menon	Shri Sringeri
Miss R. P. Mody	Sir Purushottam Thakurdas
Shri S. V. Mukerjea	Sir Dorabji Tata Trust

APPENDIX V

THE P.E.N. ALL-INDIA CENTRE

OFFICE BEARERS

(As of April 1954)

President: Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
 Vice-Presidents: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
 Shri Vallathol N. Menon
 Founder in India and Editor, *The Indian P.E.N.*
 Shrimati Sophia Wadia
 Honorary Secretaries: Shri P. G. Shah
 Shri M. R. Jambunathan

Other Members of the Executive Committee:

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar	Shri M. R. Masani
Professor M. D. Altekari	Shri R. P. Masani
Shri S. R. Dongerkery	Professor N. A. Nadvi
Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar	Shrimati Lila Ray
Dewan Bahadur K. M. Jha- veri	Shri K. G. Saiyidain
	Shri S. R. Tikekar
Dr. Indar Nath Madan	

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